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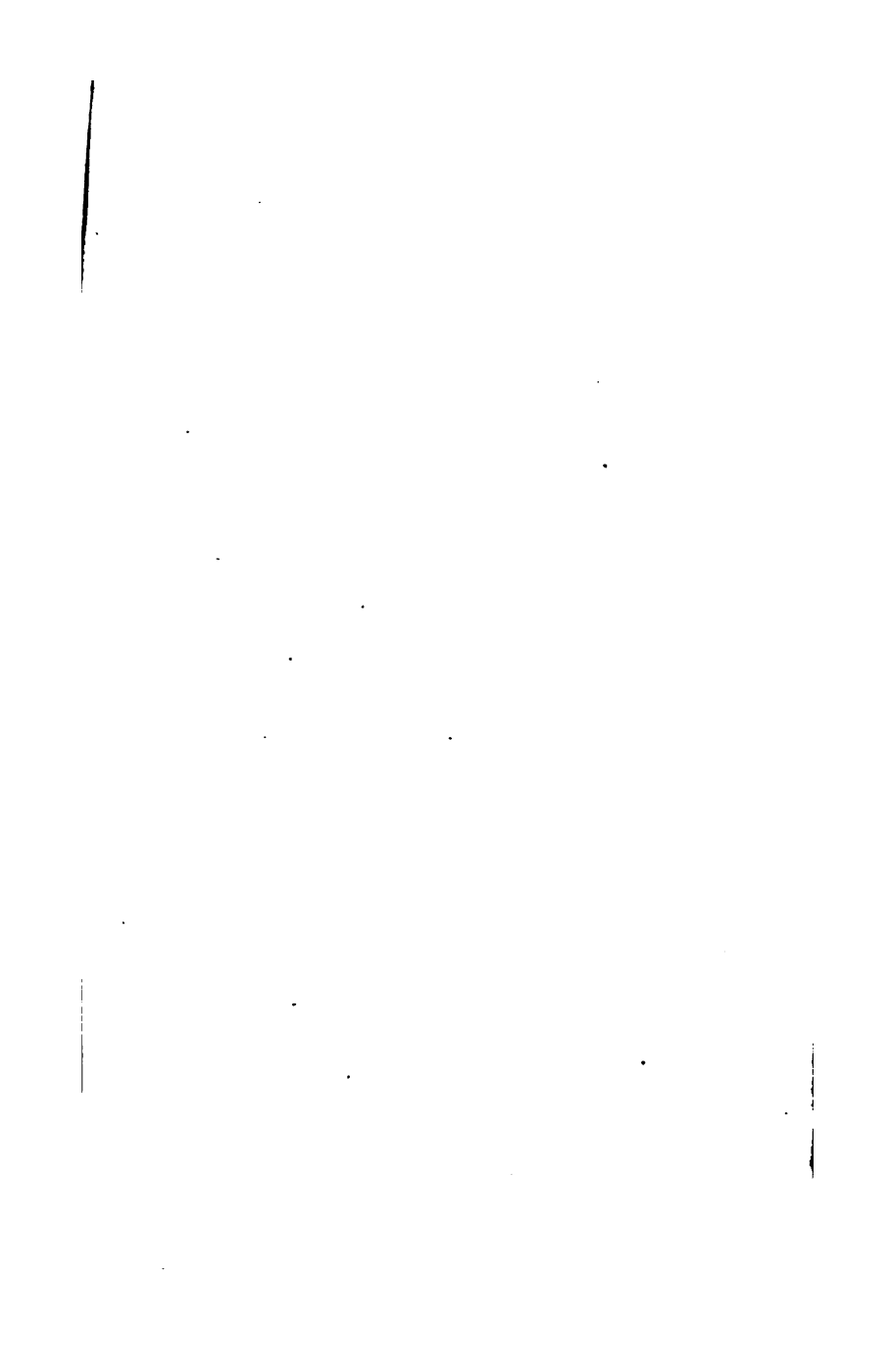
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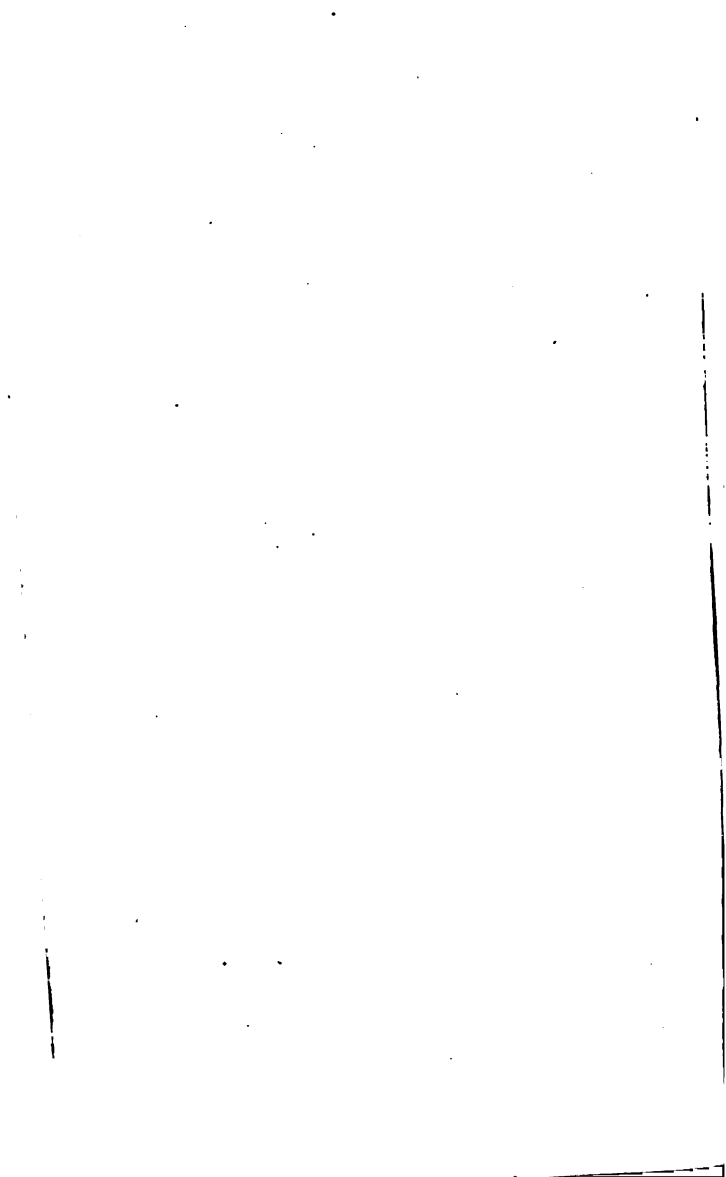




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A
SCRIPTURAL VINDICATION
OF
CHURCH ESTABLISHMENTS;

WITH A REVIEW OF THE
PRINCIPAL OBJECTIONS OF NON-CONFORMISTS.

L O N D O N :
GILBERT AND RIVINGTON, PRINTERS,
ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.

A

SCRIPTURAL VINDICATION

OF

CHURCH ESTABLISHMENTS;

WITH A REVIEW OF THE

PRINCIPAL OBJECTIONS OF NON-CONFORMISTS.

2

BY THE

REV. GEORGE HOLDEN, M.A.

Hæc est domus fidelis, hoc immortale templum; in quo si quis non sacrificaverit, immortalitatis præmium non habebit. Cujus templi et magni et eterni, quoniam Christus fabricator fuit; idem necesse est habeat in eo sacerdotium sempiternum.—LACTANTIUS, lib. iv. s. 14.

LONDON:

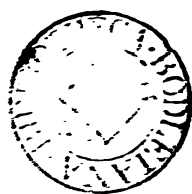
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P R E F A C E.

THE Constitution and Government of the Christian Church is a subject to which no well-informed and religious mind can be indifferent. In this hour of peril to the Established Church, it acquires a peculiar interest; and it behoves its zealous friends, as they value its welfare, and even its existence, to examine seriously the ground upon which it stands, and whether its alliance with the State, and its three-fold ministry, are based upon the foundation of revealed truth. To assist them in this inquiry is the object of the following Work, which is designed to form an illustrative digest of all the Scriptural evidence bearing upon the question.

To the accomplishment of this design, it was essential to ascertain what Scriptural arguments

our Dissenting brethren have adduced both in opposition to Ecclesiastical Establishments, and in defence of the Voluntary and Independent system. For this purpose, the Author commenced a search into the writings of Nonconformists; and, as he proceeded, noted down according to a previously arranged plan, with a minute reference to the volume and page, every thing which appeared deserving of attention. This was done with a view to refer the reader to the works from which the various objections and arguments were extracted; but upon arranging his materials, he found that even a selection from the accumulated mass would have crowded his pages with a distracting multiplicity of references, which, after all, could not be regarded in the light of authorities. He, therefore, resolved to content himself with one general reference; and has placed in an Appendix a list of the Dissenting writers consulted by him in the prosecution of his labours. As this examination has been somewhat extensive, and made with diligence, the principal of them having been read several times, he hopes that he has not overlooked any Scriptural argument of importance which they have advanced.

In collecting the evidence for a National and Episcopal Church, he has endeavoured to concentrate at least the principal Scripture testimonies relating to this branch of the subject. He has accordingly availed himself of all the helps within his reach; and a list of works in defence of the Church of England consulted by him is likewise placed in the Appendix.

A work of this kind cannot be altogether divested of a controversial cast; but it has been his anxious wish to make it as little so as possible. He has stated with, as he conceives, perfect fairness the adverse arguments on each matter in question, accompanied with such observations as may be useful in forming a sound judgment and decision. His sole aim has been to furnish a **MANUAL FOR CHURCHMEN**, who, if he have succeeded in his design, will find in it a complete *Scriptural View* of the whole controversy relating to the Constitution and Government of the Christian Church.

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A

SCRIPTURAL VINDICATION,

&c.

PART I.

THE ALLIANCE OF CHURCH AND STATE.

CHAPTER I.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

1. WHY am I a Churchman? A serious question this is to all who are not content to remain in a communion merely because they have been brought up in it; and especially so at present, when the Establishment is assailed with an hostility which avowedly aims at its destruction.

Now, in determining the claims of any church to our adhesion, this inquiry must be directed in the first place to its *doctrines*, and in the next to its *constitution and government*. Unless it be in both respects strictly accordant with the sacred writings, it can have no just title to the character of a Scriptural Church. A complete examination of the subject should therefore embrace both branches of the inquiry; for the objections of separatists have been levelled against the

constitution, as well as against the doctrines of the Anglican Church.

By some, the former is represented as of far inferior importance to the latter, and even regarded as a matter of indifference; while by others, both are deemed to be of little moment in comparison with practice.

For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight;
His can't be wrong whose life is in the right.

But argument of this kind is, to say the least, useless; perhaps presumptuous. To the sincere believer, nothing can be unimportant which the Scriptures reveal; nothing a matter of indifference which they prescribe. If our Lord has instituted a particular church-state, it cannot be lawful to depart from it; nor is it reasonable to expect that vital religion can be maintained and diffused in any other way, or that internal and spiritual grace will be conveyed through any other medium.

In a former age doctrines, together with a few ceremonies, such as the use of the surplice, the ring in marriage, the sign of the cross, bowing at the name of Jesus, kneeling at the sacrament, were the chief objects of contention by the nonconformists, many of whom appear to have been favourable to a national establishment, and some of them, to a moderate kind of episcopacy; whereas but little demur is now made at those ceremonies which, as frightful bugbears,

alarmed the nonconforming piety of other times. The great body of modern dissenters mainly coincide with the tenets of our public formularies; and justify their separation from the Church on account of her episcopal government, and alliance with the state. Hence we may waive the consideration of doctrines which are involved only in a minor degree in the present controversy, and limit the investigation to the main question at issue—the lawfulness of an establishment, and the form and constitution of a Christian Church.

The inquiry, thus limited, opens into a wide field of discussion,—whether a Christian Church be represented in the Word of God as national or congregational,—as allied with the state, or independent,—as invested with authority, or as having no influence over private judgment;—whether the Christian ministry consists of different ranks, or only of one order;—how its officers are to be ordained, how appointed, how supported;—what mode of worship is to be adopted, free prayer or set forms,—what rites and ceremonies. A right determination of these several particulars is requisite, to determine the question in dispute.

Again; it is intended further to restrict the investigation, by laying out of consideration the various reasons derived from expediency and primitive order. The blessings of the national

church, the utility of her established creed, the advantages of her liturgy and forms of public prayer, the benefits of different gradations in her ministry, the encouragement given by a legal provision to literary acquirements, and to the independent discharge of the ministerial office, her adaptation to the character of our national institutions, and similar topics, have been urged with a force which, if sacred authority cannot be alleged in opposition, appears perfectly conclusive. But the consideration of these and other analogous matters, rather of a political than religious description, do not come within the author's present design, which is simply to review and ponderate the principal evidences which the Scriptures furnish in reference to the nature and constitution of the Christian Church.

2. Whatever weight may be ascribed to other sources of argument, the controversy cannot be decided without an appeal to the Bible; for neither creeds, nor rites, nor forms of church polity ought to be received, unless they are accordant to that unerring standard. It may be presumed, *à priori*, that the Almighty would not leave the affairs of the Church, in which the eternal interests of men are concerned, without interposition and control. What information, then, has He been pleased to communicate in the volume of inspiration, respecting the outward

form of the spiritual kingdom erected by Christ, its preservation, order, and government? This is the great problem to be solved.

But arguments drawn from Scripture have been objected to, as "irrelevant and inadmissible. The ground of this objection will be perceived, when it is recollected, that arguments from that source can be conclusive only with those who admit the divinity of the Scriptures. Consequently, not with unbelievers; consequently, not with many men who, being citizens, while unfortunately they are unbelievers, will not acknowledge Scripture to be law. In an argument addressed to all classes of the community, it is vain and illogical to cite an authority which some of them do not own¹." These are the words of a writer regarded by some as the Caledonian Coryphæus of his party; but what triumph can be achieved by him who refuses to enter the ground upon which the battle is to be fought? The Bible is a divinely authenticated statute-book; and it is preposterous as well as impious to reject that which, whenever it speaks out, at once supersedes every other species of argumentation.

3. As the New Testament contains no systematic digest either of Christian doctrines or Christian morals, we are not to expect to find in it a model of ecclesiastical polity, laid down

¹ Dick, Diss. on Church Polity, p. 36.

with all the precision and minuteness of detail. The error of believing that whatever is done without the express direction of the Scriptures is sin, and that, as a perfect revelation of the will of God, they must contain a full and particular description of church government, has been for ever laid prostrate by the vigorous arm of Hooker. On all subjects of religious inquiry they supply general rules, accompanied sometimes with incidental illustrations; but leave to human judgment the application of them to particular cases. It is the same with respect of church polity, which is not minutely delineated by the sun-beam of revelation; but such general principles and occasional directions are afforded as are sufficient to enable believers, by the aid of a pious discretion, to ascertain the Divine mind and will concerning it. These general principles themselves form a faithful guide for the exercise of that discretion; so that a visible church constructed in conformity with, and according to the spirit of, the principles and the directions which the Scriptures afford, is a true Christian Church, is as really Scriptural, as if modelled by the specific enactments of a Levitical law.

What the Apostles did in founding the Christian Church was as much the suggestion of the Holy Spirit, as what they taught; and if they agreed to establish any model of ecclesiastical government, it must be considered as established

by Divine direction. "The example and practice of the Apostles in the erection of churches, in the appointment of officers and rulers, in the directions given for their walking, order, administration of censures, and all other holy things, are a sufficient indication of the mind and will of Christ about them. We do not say that in themselves they are institutions and appointments, but they infallibly declare what is so, or the mind of Christ concerning these things. Nor can this be questioned without a denial of their infallibility, faithfulness, and divine authority¹". In some things, doubtless, their example may not now be expedient, may not be practicable; yet, even here, in spirit and in principle, it is to be followed, since it descends to us under a Divine warrant, which constrains us to believe that they did what was wisest and best,—what was most agreeable to the design of their Lord and Master in the government of his kingdom. We are moreover enjoined to imitate them. "Be followers together of me," says St. Paul, "and mark (*i. e.* look at for imitation) them which walk so as ye have us for an example," Phil. iii. 17. "Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do;" ch. iv. 9. Comp. 1 Cor. iv. 16. xi. 1.; 1 Thess. i. 6.; 1 Pet. v. 3. Precepts so general cannot reasonably be restricted

¹ Dr. Owen, vol. xx. p. 93.

to the things pertaining to private conduct, but must apply to the Apostles' proceedings as rulers and superintendants of the Christian Church. In their official capacity they acted by an authority delegated from Christ, and under the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit. What, therefore, they practised and ordained, as well as what they commanded, being by the impulse of the Holy Ghost, must be followed, as far as circumstances permit, by all who take the word of God for their guide. Their example forms a precedent authenticated by Heaven, as sacred and divine as their precepts; and from which, as far as it is applicable to a settled state of the Church, it can never be allowable to depart.

As the sacred Scriptures are an authoritative rule of conduct, whatever directions they contain for the formation of the Church must be binding upon all who acknowledge their divine origin. It matters not whether they are expressly delivered, or only drawn from general laws and principles, from incidental precepts, or apostolical example; they are all equally a sacred testimony. What was written by the pen of inspiration was written for the guidance of all mankind; and, as it is declared by our Lord that his Church shall never cease in the world, it must remain for ever obligatory upon Christians. The several directions carry the impress of perpetuity and universality in their very nature, since there is the very same reason

for their observation by all persons, in all times and places. The qualifications required in a Bishop must be always necessary; and the ecclesiastical order divinely instituted in Crete or Ephesus must be right wherever the Christian Church exists. In the application it may admit some modification, according as circumstances change, and in this is especially needed the pious discretion before spoken of; but no lapse of time,—no change of condition can give authority to deviate *in principle* from that which inspiration dictated, and which, for that reason, must for ever demand the obedience of man.

4. Such is the nature of the Scriptural evidence by which the controversy is to be decided; and in order to bring it effectually to bear upon the question, Why am I a Churchman? it will be proper to divide the inquiry into three branches. *First*, What do the Scriptures teach concerning ecclesiastical establishments in general? *Secondly*, concerning the constitution of a visible Church. *Thirdly*, Does our own Church, in its form and character, correspond with the results?—Through neglect of this plan, there is a confusion and inconclusiveness in the reasonings of some controversialists, who, by mingling these questions together, present nothing clearly and distinctly to the mind. It is necessary to ascertain, on Scriptural grounds, the lawfulness of an union between Church and State, before we can be prepared to enter upon an examina-

tion of the particular union subsisting in this realm. It is no less necessary to determine what form, authority, and rule our Saviour has instituted in his Church, before we can decide rightly respecting that which is established amongst us. But having collected the information which the Scriptures supply in reference to these general questions, we may then apply it as a test to the Establishment under which so large a majority of the educated classes of our country esteem it their happiness to live. If, when tried by this test, it be found radically unscriptural and unsound, the sons of the Church of England must at once abandon her defence; for argument in favour of that which has no foundation in Scripture is nugatory. But if she be proved to be, in the general outline, and in all her leading features, truly apostolical, it will then be a bounden duty to hold communion with her: a few spots and blemishes,—a few motes, only rendered visible by the evangelical splendour of her beams, should not be allowed to alienate the affection and homage of her grateful children. Imperfection cleaves to every thing on earth; and should the Anglican Church be found, in some lesser points, not to correspond with the Scriptural model, it will follow, not that she ought of right to be abandoned and demolished, but that such a reformation should take place as will render the correspondency complete.

CHAPTER II.

THE CIVIL MAGISTRATE'S RIGHT TO INTERFERE IN MATTERS OF RELIGION.

I.—The first branch, according to the proposed division of the inquiry, includes, 1st, the magistrate's right to interfere in matters of religion ; 2ndly, the principles which guide him in establishing a religion ; 3rdly, the civil privileges he may bestow ; 4thly, the civil penalties he may inflict.

In entering upon this subject, it is indispensable to ascertain and define what constitutes the essential nature, the real principle of religious institutions ; for that is the true ground of controversy ; and till it is determined, the desired union between Churchmen and Dissenters can never be effected. What, then, is that principle of an ecclesiastical establishment to which the latter are so violently opposed ?

Does it consist in the imposition of certain doctrines, rites, and ceremonies, to which all the members are to conform ? The Dissenters, it is true, have no written articles, but they have what amounts to the same thing, each section of

them having its peculiar tenets, which form the test of membership¹. Does it consist in a pecuniary provision, legally appropriated for the support of its ministers, and the maintenance of its services? This surely will not be affirmed, when it is considered that endowments, and some of them large in amount, are secured by law to many dissenting chapels, the frequenters of which would spurn the idea of their being establishments. Does it consist in the appointment of a clergy, or order of men secluded from other professions to attend upon the offices of religion? Assuredly not; for the Episcopalians in America, the Romanists in England, and the Protestants in the Vaudois, have their regularly appointed pastors, whom it would be a perversion of terms to call the pastors of an established Church. The same may be said perhaps of every sect, excepting Quakers; all having an order of ministers elected according to their respective forms and fashions; and yet that they are not established is their conviction and their boast.

The several particulars hitherto mentioned must exist in every Christian country, where the people are governed by known and equitable laws. Those who think alike on sacred matters, who hold the same religious tenets, will associate together for religious purposes: they will form themselves into a society or societies; they will

¹ See part ii. chap. iv. § 2.

make rules for their own internal government; they will appoint an order of men to teach and minister in spiritual things; they will subscribe sums of money, give lands, or bequeath legacies, for the support of such ministers, and for the encouragement of their institutions. This will go on till at length the society will arrive at the acquisition of temporal possessions; for it is morally impossible to prevent the people from disposing of their property as their reason and conscience shall direct. One sect in the end may obtain the lead; and through the excellence of its principles, or through the superior zeal, numbers, rank, and wealth of its votaries, may obtain either a partial or complete ascendancy. Thus, wherever Christianity is nationally professed, religious societies will arise, and in process of time they naturally and necessarily establish themselves; nor is it in the power of the civil magistrate to prevent it, even where he disapproves of their formation, without a total destruction of that liberty of conscience which all have an indefeasible right to enjoy.

It is trifling to dispute about a name; by whatever designation they may be called, they are, to a certain extent, religious establishments. Governments must allow them; and therefore it is an idle dispute whether dissent be or be not legalized and established in this country. A variety of sects have sprung up and established themselves; have formed rules for their internal

regulation ; have raised funds for the support of their institutions ;—all which they will continue to do. Whether they can be legally said to be establishments, or not, they are so to all intents and purposes ; nor is it within the reach of parliamentary enactments to prevent it, without a violation of civil and religious rights.

Such societies or religious institutions arise by an inevitable process in Christian nations ; but to some one the magistrate may give the preference, and annex to it certain temporal privileges. It is this which constitutes the civil establishment of religion ; and, by consequence, his right to do it is the real principle involved in the dispute. By “right” is meant a Scriptural right, a right on Christian grounds ; and by the terms “magistrate,” “civil ruler,” “governor,” “sovereign,” “prince,” &c. are designated that person or persons, whoever they may be, to whom the legislative power is intrusted, and from whom all subordinate powers, authorities, offices, and appointments, are derived. And in the following discussion they are always spoken of as invested with power, as acting in their public capacity. That in their private capacity they may and ought to encourage religion, no one denies ; but the controversy is, whether they are authorized to adopt any methods of civil administration for the maintenance and promulgation of Christianity in the land.

The question at issue, then, has no relation to

any particular kind of civil support. Governments may sanction different kinds of Church polity, but whichever is adopted by them for the spread of religion, and the performance of sacred offices among the subjects, it is essentially an ecclesiastical establishment. What means are or are not Scriptural belongs to a future stage of the inquiry. Our only concern at present is, whether a government is warranted by the word of God to exercise its powers in matters of religion: if it is not, a legal union of any kind between Church and State cannot be lawful; if it is, then comes the inquiry as to the Scriptural mode of exercising this power. Hence the real ground of controversy, in reference to this part of the subject, is, not whether this or that establishment be more effective, not whether this or that be more Scriptural in its constitution, but whether the State, as a State, is permitted, by the word of God, to employ any means for the inculcation of the truths of Christianity: in other words, whether the civil governor has a right, on Scriptural grounds, to adopt and sanction, by the authority with which he is invested, any plan for disseminating religion among the people. This is the simple question; and if it can be satisfactorily answered in the affirmative, *the principle* of an ecclesiastical establishment must be conceded. Let us, then, in the first place, examine what has been advanced in opposition to it.

II.—1. Ecclesiastical establishments, it is said, are human ordinances, and as such are condemned by Christ's declaration, "In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of me," Matt. xv. 9. But our Lord is here speaking only against such traditions and commandments as "transgress the commandment of God," v. 3. and "make the commandment of God of none effect," v. 6. He does not forbid the observance of such human institutions as do not transgress the law of God; and before this text can be applied against Church establishments, it must be first shown that they are inconsistent with that law. Till then it is wholly irrelevant.

2. From our Saviour's words, "The princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant," Matt. xx. 25—27, it is argued that he forbids all interference of civil governors in things of a religious nature; and that no one can have authority or jurisdiction over another in such matters is further urged from ch. xxiii. 8—11: "Be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon earth; for one is your

Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters; for one is your Master, even Christ." See Luke xxii. 25, 26 ¹.

Let it first be inquired how far the argument, if pushed to its legitimate conclusion, will carry us. The words of our Lord are not accompanied with any limitation to spiritual matters; the language is general, and, if understood in its general sense, it may be applied to civil governors, and so made to sanction the notion of that liberty and equality which never did and never can co-exist with social order. It may be understood as forbidding the authority of princes over their subjects, of parents over their children, of masters over their servants, which is enforced in positive terms in other parts of the New Testament. Nay, in the unrestricted sense, every kind of religious instructor must be included. If we are to "call no man father upon earth" without reservation, we must renounce the guidance of any earthly teacher; we must neither lend our minds to his instructions nor submit our wills to his admonitions, and so render null and void the whole order and appointment of spiritual pastors and masters.

Of necessity, then, some exceptions must be annexed to the universality of the language used by our Lord; as is fully admitted by the dissenters, Gill, Henry, Doddridge, as well as by

¹ See part ii. chap. iii. § ii. 1.

the most eminent foreign commentators; and has ever been acknowledged in practice by nonconformists themselves. With them are ministers, deacons, committees, treasurers, trustees, secretaries, who "exercise authority over them." It may differ in extent from that of rulers over a national church; but in both it is equally an exercise of power; and if the one is forbidden by the language of our Saviour, the other must. At any rate, it must be understood with some exceptions; and therefore it must be proved that the authority of a church establishment is not one of them, before it can be justly appealed to in opposition.

In the first of the cited passages the expressions "whosoever will be great among you," and "whosoever will be chief among you," imply a species of superiority and pre-eminence of some over others in the church. His urging also his own example, who was their Lord and Master, together with the occasion which gave rise to the discourse, plainly show that his drift was, not to denounce church government, but to repress the spirit of envy and worldly ambition, and to impress upon their minds that the dignity of Christians does not arise from the possession of lordly power and authority, but from the services they render to others, even as the Son of man came not to exercise temporal dominion, but to serve others¹.

¹ Christian Expositor, *in loc.* See Campbell's note, "Non

In Matt. xxiii. 8—11, Christ cannot have intended absolutely to prohibit the assumption of these titles; for they are given by the sacred writers to teachers and distinguished men, as may be seen in Poli Synop., Wolfius, Wetstein, Kuinöel, and others on the place, and in Schleusner, Rose's Parkhurst, Suicer, and Buxtorffii Lex. Talm. Rab. in voc. He can, therefore, only have meant to forbid Christians to assume them in the same way as the Scribes and Pharisees, through pride and ostentation, without striving or wishing to deserve them. Be not, like them, "called Rabbi; for one is your Master;" you have only one teacher and instructor invested with that infallible authority which is claimed by the Scribes and Pharisees; "even Christ; and all ye are brethren," and no one ought to pretend to such an authority over the rest. "And call no man your father upon earth;" do not attribute to your human teachers the power which the Pharisees challenge by claiming the title of fathers; "for one is your Father, which is in heaven;" to God only must you yield this absolute subjection. "Neither be ye called masters;" do not be teachers of such characters and pretensions as the Scribes and Pharisees; "for one is your Master;" you have only one teacher entitled to the authority

imperium omne hoc verbo (*κατακυριεύουσιν*) tolli, sed ejus abusum." Wolfius.

which they claim, "even Christ¹."—From this examination it is apparent that neither of the passages militate against a just and legitimate authority, either civil or ecclesiastical.

3. Dissenters lay great stress upon our Saviour's declaration, "My kingdom is not of this world," John xviii. 36., from which they infer, that "it is a community distinct from all earthly ones, and apart by itself; a cause that needs not, asks not, admits not the coarse and rude instruments of secular power, or policy, for its establishment, support, and progress, but is entirely a spiritual community. Not merely not a kingdom for temporal purposes, but which is not set up or supported by worldly governments¹."

If this view of our Lord's declaration be correct, it will apply with the same force against all secular means of spreading the Gospel. If it prohibits the civil magistrate from employing means for the propagation of Christianity, it must also prohibit societies, meetings, committees, &c., from employing them; for both equally use the instrumentality of human means. Should it be said that the latter are of a spiritual nature, engaging spiritual men for spiritual objects, the same may with equal truth be said of the administration of the civil magistrate in his character of patron and governor of the

¹ Christian Expositor on v. 8.

² James, Address, p. 11.

Church. In principle there is no difference; both use gold and silver, and other secular means; the one is as much "of this world" as the other; and if the State's appointing and supporting a clergy be condemned by our Saviour's words, so must the election and support of ministers by any society or body of men; and, following the argument to its ultimate results, we must in the same way infer from the text the condemnation of all and every worldly means for the furtherance of the Gospel.

The sectarian view of the passage, then, in as much as it proves too much, cannot be just; and this will further appear from its true interpretation.—The Gospel dispensation is represented in the Scriptures as a kingdom which God would set up, of a spiritual nature, of which Christ is the head, and which, commencing in this world, is to be perfected in the next. To this Jesus refers, declaring, that He is a King, and possesses a kingdom; but it "is not of this world," or rather, "not from this world¹;" that is, not

¹ *Ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου*, "is not from this world." Bp. Pearce. "*Ἐκ* præcise notat originem, ut mox *ἐντεῦθεν*, hinc." Bengel. Gnomon in loc. "*Ἐλvai ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου* significare potest vel originem sumere ex his hominibus, vel simile esse regno terreno. Utrumque eodem redit, si sententia spectatur." Rosenmüller. The exposition given in the text is confirmed by the foreign commentators, Lampe, Wolfius, Rosenmüller, Tittmann, Kuinöel, Semler, Grotius, and others in *Poli Synop.*, as well as by the most eminent of our own.

derived from it, not of human or mundane original. If it were an earthly kingdom, "then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews;" they would use force and worldly means for my protection; "but now, for as much as they do not, it is evident that "my kingdom is not from hence," not from the world, but from heaven, a spiritual kingdom, and therefore is not opposed to Cæsar, or any civil government. The passage, therefore, is a declaration that Christ's kingdom is a spiritual dispensation, not an earthly sovereignty; but how, or in what way it may be most effectually promoted, whether by legalized institutions or otherwise, is a question to which it cannot justly be applied.

Dr. Wardlaw, evidently hard pressed by the force of this interpretation, endeavours to evade it in the following manner.—Supposing the design of our Lord was to allay the jealous surmises of the Roman governor, by asserting that his kingdom was of a very different nature from that of this world's potentates, and so not of a kind to interfere with any political authority; yet, says he, "there is one consideration which appears to be unaccountably overlooked,—so far as this text is concerned, the turning point of the present controversy. It is found in the word *NOW*: '*now* is my kingdom not from hence.' The words involve a comparison be-

tween the past and the present; and they intimate a change,—a change from what had been to what was now to be. He had all along—in a way which we understand, though we have little ground to suppose that Pilate did—been King of the Jews. 'But, in former times, his kingdom, in its form and constitution, had been national;—there was in it an incorporation of the civil and the sacred; and it was maintained and defended by similar outward means as other kingdoms;—but now it was to be otherwise. The 'now' is not a mere unemphatic and inferential particle; for indeed there is nothing of inference in the case. It announces a transition,—a transition from a comparatively secular and worldly state of his kingdom, to a state essentially different. In this view, therefore, we have in the passage a distinct disavowal, from the Redeemer's own lips, of the Old Testament constitution of his kingdom, as in any respect a model for the kingdom he was about to establish;—a declaration that its national and worldly state was now to terminate, and that at this new æra, it was to assume a new character,—embracing as its subjects, those who were 'of the truth,' *i. e.* who believed his doctrine, and lived under its practical influence—and maintaining its ground, and punishing its delinquents, and extending its conquests, by no power but the moral power of

the same truth,—by no sword, but ‘the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God¹.’”

If we were to allow the correctness of this comment on the word “now,” it in no way strengthens the sectarian view of the passage. That a vast change took place in the constitution of the Church by the preaching of Christ; that He instituted a more pure and spiritual religion is most certain, and in the assertion of this spirituality of His kingdom lies the whole force of His answer to Pilate; but it has no reference to any means for the increase and perpetuation of His kingdom in the world. Granting the premises deduced from our Lord’s expression, they do not warrant the inference against national establishments; they do not show that while the merchant may support religion by his money, the monarch may not by his power. But they are based upon a gross misinterpretation, which betrays either a want of scholarship, a want of candour, or a want of attention. The Greek particle, like the English “now” by which it is here rendered, is used not only in reference to time, but also as a particle of connection in discourse or argument; for proof of which it will be sufficient to refer to John viii. 40. ix. 41. xvii. 5., to Hoogeveen, *De Particulis*, and to the *Lexicons* of Hederic, Parkhurst, and

¹ Glasgow Voluntary Church Lect. p. 43.

Schleusner. That it is employed in the latter sense in the case before us must be evident from an impartial examination of the context; and so it is explained by the most learned critics¹. Dr. Wardlaw's argument, therefore, rests upon hollow ground; and, even admitting his premises, the Saviour's declaration can have no bearing upon the question of an established Church, which, if properly constructed, does not aim at the objects of human policy, but to provide the most efficient means to advance Christ's spiritual kingdom.

4. Upon the texts already examined, and others descriptive of the new dispensation, as Isa. ix. 6, 7; John iv. 23; Rom. vii. 1. et seq.; 2 Cor. iii. 7. et seq.; Heb. viii. 1. et seq.; non-conformists build another plea. The Church, say they, is a spiritual society, widely distinct from earthly ones, set up not by human but divine authority, not for temporal but eternal objects; from which they infer the incompatibility of any union between her and the State. The spirituality of Christ's kingdom no believer in revelation denies, but it is this very circum-

¹ "Νῦν, particula adversativa, non temporis." Bengel. "Atqui regnum meum non est hinc." Wolfius. "Νῦν pro ἄλλῳ, sed regnum meum hinc non est, scilicet ex hoc mundo." Koecher, *Analecta* in loc. "But my kingdom is not hence." Campbell. "But mine is not a secular kingdom." Harwood. "But my kingdom is not hence." Wakefield. "But indeed my kingdom is not hence." *Improved Version by the Unitarians*.—I do not appeal to writers of our own Church; but all the best commentators understood the νῦν as a connective particle.

stance which renders her alliance with the civil power both practicable and beneficial. If they were not distinct in nature, they would either clash, and produce all the evils of an imperium in imperio, or the one would sooner or later be merged in the other; whereas, being different kinds of authority they can co-exist in harmonious combination. This may be collected from the declaration of our Lord, who evidently designed to impress upon the mind of Pilate that his kingdom, in consequence of its spiritual nature, so far from being adverse to, might amicably co-exist with the dominion of Cæsar, or of any other civil governor. We may not perhaps be justified in drawing from it a positive argument in favour of an alliance between Church and State; but we are certainly warranted in the inference that the spirituality of Christ's kingdom does not render such an alliance impracticable or in any way incompatible.

5. St. Paul says, "Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh; for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds," &c. 2 Cor. x. 3, 4. But an union between Church and State, it is alleged, secularizes the former, and involves her in an unholy alliance with temporal things, bringing in its train parliamentary privileges, a graduated hierarchy, mitred prelates, spiritual peers, secu-

lar courts, lay chancellors, splendid cathedrals, pompous rituals, tithes, dues, and, in short, connecting it with the honours, the dignities, and the emoluments of the world.—Such declamation is mighty well as a piece of rhetoric ; but this much dreaded alliance between what is spiritual and what is secular exists in every denomination of Christians. The erection of chapels, the election and payment of preachers by voluntary contributions, the letting of pews, the formation of boards and congregational unions, the appointment of managers, trustees, and committees, the transmission of deputies or delegates, and other expedients to forward the Dissenting cause, are just as much “carnal things” as the appendages of the most gorgeous of national churches. No one of sane mind supposes that worldly things have in themselves power for the conversion of souls, but, as subsidiary means, they may be useful ; nay, to a certain degree, are absolutely necessary ; and the Apostle lays it down as the right of ministers to receive a supply of “carnal things” from the people : 1 Cor. ix. 11. So long as Christ has a Church in the world, it must be connected with the things of this world : its doctrines must be promulgated, and its ordinances administered by human means ; all of which, of whatever kind they may be, are only “carnal things,” in themselves wholly inefficient ; but they may, by the Divine blessing, be instrumental in the diffusion

of pure Christianity. It is folly to advance against ecclesiastical establishment an objection which applies with equal force against every kind of religious association.

6. Establishments, it is said, are subversive of Christian liberty, which is described as the glorious privilege of believers; Rom. viii. 21; 1 Cor. viii. 9; Gal. v. 1, 13; 1 Pet. ii. 16. *et al.* From such texts as these it is argued that, as every man is accountable to God alone for his conduct, liberty of conscience is an unalienable right; that religion, as an affair of conscience, is not to be controlled by human authority; and consequently, that it is incapable, without a violation of Christian liberty, of being directed and prescribed by a civil establishment. Dissenters, in the eagerness of opposition, picture in imagination an establishment as a dire chimaera, attended by the ministers of arbitrary power, and, in its desolating progress, fettering the judgment, and trampling upon the sacred rights of conscience. "By an establishment," says one of the most eminent among them, "I mean an enactment, or body of enactments, by the civil government in any country, enabling the executive power of that government to *direct or controul the religion of its subjects in faith, mode of worship, or acts of discipline.* This interference may take place by *commanding* to believe and teach any doctrines, to worship in any prescribed manner, or to receive such or

such persons to church communion, or to any office of ministration in the Church, or by *prohibiting* to believe, worship, or exercise discipline in such or such a way¹." Mistakes like this can only be accounted for from a want of acquaintance with the object of their dislike.

A church establishment, according to the account of it in the beginning of this chapter, is the employment by the magistrate of civil means for the support of religion; and the objection proceeds upon the assumption that it must be followed by a violation of the right of conscience, than which nothing can be more groundless. The mere act of conferring civil favours upon a particular system in no way trenches upon the right of private judgment and of free inquiry. The privileges granted can be no injustice to any one, since no one can have a claim of right to a matter of voluntary favour; they cannot impose shackles upon the conscience, since every one may accept or reject the favoured system, according to the convictions of his mind. The legislature does not force any to adopt the creed of the Church which it endows. Obedience to spiritual rulers is no more inconsistent with the right of private judgment, than obedience to civil rulers is with rational liberty. The same authority which enjoins every soul to "be subject to the higher powers," Rom. xiii. 1.,

¹ Dr. Pye Smith, Letters to Professor Lee, p. 19.

gives this command, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls," Heb. xiii. 17. Religious institutions are merely the medium by which religious instruction is offered to the people, who are at perfect liberty to embrace or reject them. There is no compulsion; subscription to articles is a matter of choice; and the assemblies of the Church are as voluntary as those of the conventicle.

If any Church-government puts trammels upon the judgment, and lords it over God's heritage, it tramples upon the most sacred rights; but coercive impositions are not essential to an establishment. The Church of England, for instance, repudiates compulsion; she does not "*control* the religion" of the people, nor "*command* to believe and teach any doctrines," nor "*prohibit* to believe, worship, or exercise discipline in such or such a way." She forces no one within her fold, nor does she prevent the retreat of those who may object to her doctrines or her worship. She provides religious instruction and opportunities of joining in religious ordinances for all the people, leaving them absolutely free to accept her offers or to refuse them; to go to church or to the meeting-house; to serve God in any way their wisdom or their folly may prescribe. In fine, she imposes no restraint upon the spiritual freedom of her members, who are as completely a *voluntary*

society as any of those sects who so proudly triumph in their independence.

7. An Establishment, it is urged, prevents both its ministers and its members from the enjoyment of important privileges, and the performance of important duties, and for that reason cannot be consistent with genuine Christianity. "To my humble judgment," says Dr. Pye Smith, "it appears that the chief precepts (indeed I might say *all* of them), which refer to 'the communion of saints,' or Church-fellowship, are of such a kind as *cannot* be obeyed upon the position of a State-Church establishment; but *can* be and *are* obeyed, upon that of the Dissenting constitution. I do not now ask whether that constitution should, of scriptural right, be Episcopalian or Presbyterian or Congregational; for under each regimen, a Church *can* obey these precepts if it be free from foreign control, but it *cannot* obey them if it be subjected to that control." Such precepts are conceived to be the following, viz.: Matt. xviii. 15—18; 1 Cor. v. 3—13; 2 Cor. ii. 3—9; Gal. vi. 1; 2 Thess. iii. 6. 14; 1 Thess. v. 12—24; 1 John iii. 1; and some others¹.

These precepts, it is acknowledged, can be obeyed under any regimen, "if it be free from foreign control." Now, as we shall see hereafter, the civil ruler can neither claim nor

¹ Second Letter to Professor Lee, p. 18.

exercise any control over, or jurisdiction in spiritual things; these he leaves free and unfettered. Whatever religious system he may support, it must be whole and entire; it must be maintained in such a way as is compatible with the free exercise of *all* the duties it enjoins. If he establishes presbyterianism, it must be with all its spiritual rights, and liberties, and privileges; if episcopalianism, it must be the same. To infringe these in the smallest degree would be to establish neither Presbyterianism nor Episcopalianism, but a corrupt system of his own. His support of any religion, then, implies his affording protection to its advocates in the undisturbed exercise of *all* the duties which they conceive it requires from them: of course it does not interfere with, or alter the measure of Gospel obedience. If, for instance, the precepts which relate to "the communion of saints" *can* be obeyed under the Episcopal form of church government, they may be obeyed when it is supported by the State; for in such matters the State imposes no restraint: and, in fact, the Episcopalian in England feels himself as much at liberty in this respect as the Episcopalian in America, where no national establishment exists. This might be confirmed by an examination of the texts referred to; but the objection is too clearly self-destructive to require further comment.

8. It is contended that, if the magistrate have

a right to establish a religion, he will have a right to establish Lutheranism, Presbyterianism, Popery, nay, Mohammedism, Paganism, or any form of idolatrous worship. This objection, though repeated with a sickening frequency, is utterly worthless: since the magistrate, as will be shown in the next chapter, is bound, like every other man, to choose what his judgment and conscience pronounce to be the true religion; and, like every other man, it is at the peril of his soul if he makes a wrong choice, only he is under still greater responsibility than others, inasmuch as the influence of his conduct reaches much farther.

But it is also contended, that the admission of such a right is to make the choice of a religion for the people to depend upon the fallible judgment of the magistrate; and that it is unreasonable to suppose it to be the divine will to subject a matter relating to the eternal interests of souls to so weak and erring a test as man's judgment. The plausibility of this will vanish, when it is considered that the Almighty has made many other important functions to rest upon the same fallible basis. It is the right and duty of sovereigns to consult the temporal good of their subjects; yet, because they are liable to error and often do err in it, are we to infer that no such duty is imposed by their Maker? Parents are to instruct their children, and masters their pupils, in religion; and, because they may teach

a false one, are we to argue against the duty of bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? It is unquestionably a sacred obligation upon individuals to choose a religion; yet, because they may make an erroneous choice, are we to deny them this privilege? The objection, in short, involves the absurdity of arguing against a thing from its abuse; and if we deny the right of civil rulers to interfere in religion, because it may be abused, it must in the end drive us to consequences which will allow no rest to the soles of our feet till we repose in the bosom of an infallible church. The magistrate's duty, like that of private persons, is to search, to examine, and to support the truth, as it is in Jesus: and in proportion to the overwhelming importance of the subject, should be his anxious care to have a conscience rightly directed, and a judgment well informed.

The duty of civil rulers to establish a national religion, is accompanied with directions to establish it only by such means as are sanctioned by the sacred writings, and by a due regard to the public weal; and within the boundary of these prescriptions, even error in the performance of the duty cannot, it is presumed, be productive of very serious evils. It is less dangerous than in the exercise of other civil functions, since error here is attended with the powerful counteraction which the principle of

toleration calls into operation. In giving exclusive privileges to one religion, he must grant to others the liberty of serving God in their own way, and of adopting that creed, and that mode of worship, which they may deem agreeable to the word of God, and best adapted to secure the salvation of their souls¹. Besides, though the possibility of error on the part of the magistrate is freely admitted, in affairs of religion we have especial reason to expect the controlling agency of divine providence. All his dispensations are accommodated to the imperfect condition of his creatures; and he invests some of them with high authority and power, which they sometimes wield for wrong and oppression, but His almighty arm brings good out of evil, and overrules the errors of princes, and the wickedness of subjects, for the accomplishment of His wise and gracious designs.

The objection, moreover, proves a great deal too much; for if it be valid against one method of promoting religion, it must be equally valid against every other; since no means can be employed for the support of truth, which may not be made use of for the support of error. If the magistrate ought not to annex civil sanctions to religion, because he may, by an error of judgment, establish a false one, the Dissenters ought

¹ See Chap. v. § 8.

not to employ human means to advantage "the cause," and "the interest" which they believe to be right, because they may be deceived, that cause may be unsound, that interest unscriptural. In fact, the like argument may be made use of against any thing which, either through the weakness of men's judgment, or the corruption of their hearts, may be applied to a bad as well as a good purpose.

An objection, therefore, which legitimately goes to an extent which neither common sense nor reason admits, cannot possess any validity. Every exercise of civil power affecting the peace and welfare of society is liable to error; for government having no superior, can be under no infallible control: and it may adopt a creed, as well as means of supporting it, which are unscriptural. But these, it is evident, are not essential to an establishment, and that which concludes against them, will not therefore conclude against all employment of means. Because some establishments are wrong, it will not follow that there ought to be no establishment.

9. It is urged that if the magistrate is bound to exercise the power of Christ in support of religion, the care of souls will devolve upon him, and he will be empowered to assume the spiritual functions, whereas, Christ hath appointed an order of ministers to perform them. But the inference is not just. In matters of reli-

gion he acts only in his civil capacity; and consequently all the support he can give, and all the privileges he can confer are only of a civil and secular nature. The sacred functions are committed to spiritual persons, and civil governors cannot exercise them, cannot confer them, cannot qualify any for the ministration of the word and sacraments. The laws of God do not warrant them in the assumption of any such powers; but, on the other hand, restrain them to the exercise of their secular supremacy; and they cannot lawfully enact any thing contrary to what these laws enjoin.

10. There is no precept in the Gospel enjoining ecclesiastical Establishments; the want of which, our opponents insist is equivalent to a prohibition. To this it has been answered, that it is unreasonable to expect a positive precept in the case, inasmuch as it must be liable to various modifications, according to political circumstances in different nations; that its observance was impossible till kings and civil rulers had embraced the Christian faith; that there was no occasion for an express command, the right of the magistrate to take care of religion being enforced by the example of the Jewish system, and generally acknowledged; that Church Establishments could not be specially enjoined without too precise a specification of their form and constitution to admit of their being accommodated to the peculiar circum-

strated by Sclater, Brookesby, Bingham, and a whole host of learned writers.

Though it is unnecessary to dwell longer upon a matter not coming within the design of this work, it may not be improper to observe, that the civil establishment of Christianity in the earlier ages was superseded by the miraculous powers vouchsafed to the primitive Church. In the first planting and propagation of the Gospel, there was a supernatural agency, which, if at all compatible with the agency of secular power, disdained its use. It is of no consequence to determine how long these remained in the church; probably they were gradually withdrawn; they were at least continued sufficiently long till Christianity had gained a firm footing in the world; and the traditionary evidence would for a while be so strong and irresistible as would suffice for the spread of religion, till it pleased Providence to call in the aid of those external means which the piety of rulers can so beneficially employ in its support. There was also a fitness and propriety in leaving the doctrine of the cross to make its silent way by persuasion and conviction, not only without the assistance of human powers, but against its prejudices, against its persecution, against all the efforts of its vengeance. The progress of the Christian religion amid obstacles apparently insuperable, and its triumph over foes so inveterate, demonstrated its Divine origin, and a

Divine agency supporting it. Had it been aided by an alliance with the secular authorities, it would have been deprived of that striking evidence which accrues from its rapid propagation in spite of the most malicious and most potent opposition.

Nor did the state of religion *begin* to decline, as the objection assumes, immediately upon its establishment by Constantine. The corruption of its purity had commenced at an early period, and had been gradually going forward long previous to that era. Even in the Apostolic age, error in doctrine, and immorality in practice, had invaded the sanctuary; 1 Cor. v. 1; xv. 12, et seq.; Gal. i. 6.; Phil. ii. 21.; 2 Thess. ii. 1, et seq.; iii. 6, 11, 14.; 1 Tim. i. 4, et seq.; v. 12.; vi. 3, et seq.; 2 Tim. i. 15; ii. 16, et seq.; iii. 6. et seq.; 1 John ii. 18, 19.; iv. 1, et seq.; Jude 4.; Rev. ii. 2, et seq.; iii. 1, et seq. Factious divisions, unreasonable schisms, and heretical opinions, were rife in the second and third centuries; and the church was torn with intestine divisions, as we learn from the concurrent testimony of the ancient writers. The non-establishment of religion, then, is not a preservative against heresy and error; and the age of Constantine cannot justly be appealed to as illustrative of the injurious effects of religious establishments.

12. The inutility of religious establishments is urged as a strong evidence of their being

contrary to the genius of Christianity. The magistrate, say they, with all the plenitude of power, can only influence the outward practice; he cannot reach the heart, nor make men really pious; and therefore cannot, by any mode of civil administration, advance the interests of true religion. But, though he cannot directly reach the heart, he may indirectly, by providing the means of bringing religion home to men's business and bosoms. As the ministrations of the gospel cannot be continued in the world without the intervention of some kind of secular means, he may supply these to a certain extent, which, as means to an end, may be highly useful, and instrumental to the inculcation of religion as an inward principle. If, however, the objection avails against the magistrate's interference in religion, it must avail against that of private persons; and so lead to the rejection of all and every human means, whether by Churchman or Dissenters, for promoting Christianity.

III. From this review of the Scripture evidence brought forward against the principle of Church Establishments, we are fully justified in pronouncing it completely nugatory. Such institutions have existed since the days of Constantine; they have been recognised by nearly all Christian governments; and the burden rests with our adversaries to prove them to be contrary to the word of God; for those who es-

pouse the affirmative of a question, must prove their assertion. As they have completely failed in this, we may safely acquiesce in the general belief that they are proper instruments for the dissemination of religious truth.

Besides, the non-existence of Scripture proof against them, lays a solid foundation for argument on the ground of expediency. However great and numerous the advantages of a national Church may appear, they cannot be put into the scales against a single adverse scriptural declaration; but since it has been evinced that nothing of the kind is to be found in the volume of revelation, the stage is cleared for the admission of such evidence. The magistrate is left to the free exercise of those rights in regard to religion, which, antecedently to revelation, he possesses by the law of nature; and, not being forbidden, he may devise such measures as in reason and sound policy appear best adapted to the promotion of Christian knowledge. But higher ground ought to be taken; and it shall now be shewn that Divine authority not only *permits* but really *sanctions* him in establishing a national religion.

1. The first thing that attracts our attention, in reference to this subject, is the account of Melchisedek, Gen. xiv. On meeting with Abraham, after his returning from the slaughter of the kings, "he blessed him;" and in consequence Abraham gave Melchisedek "tithes of

all," ver. 20. This payment of tithes is clearly stated as having taken place in connexion with what the latter had done as a priest; so that under the patriarchal religion we have an undoubted instance of the union of the civil and ecclesiastical powers in the same person who as priest received tithes from the patriarch for his support.

But will not the full and fair inference be the propriety of uniting the civil and ecclesiastical functions in the persons of Christian kings? Now, supposing it does go to prove that such an union *may* take place without a breach of propriety, this is quite immaterial to the argument, which rests upon the fact of the regal and sacerdotal offices being combined in Melchisedek. It is recorded without the slightest intimation of blame; and the apostle founds upon it an argument for the pre-eminence of the priesthood of Christ over that of Aaron and his son, Heb. vii. Is it possible that such an argument could have been used, and that Christ would be declared "a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek," if it had been wrong in Melchisedek as a king to interfere in matters of religion? We may surely then infer, that it is right in the magistrate to take care of the things pertaining to religion.

2. Abraham "must have been a man of no trifling possessions, who had three hundred and eighteen servants *born among his property*

whom he could entrust with arms, Gen. xiv. 14; it implies that he had many *not* born in his house, but bought with money; some also, doubtless, were old; some were women and some children; these together make a considerable tribe. In fact, Abraham appears to correspond exactly to a modern Emir; to possess many of the rights of sovereignty in no small degree, and to be little other than an independent prince¹. But this prince exerted his authority in respect to the moral and religious conduct of his dependents, which is assigned by the Almighty as the cause for selecting him to be the vehicle of blessings to mankind. "Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him. For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord," Gen. xviii. 18, 19; comp. ch. xvii. 26, 27. Here then is an example of interference in matters of religion by the ruler of a considerable body of people; and that too, in the patriarchal age, which could not be affected by the Jewish peculiarity; an example set by the father of all who believe, both Jews and Gentiles, and approved by the Almighty, who states it as the reason for blessing him. If this does not, it is

¹ Calmet, Dict. in voc. Abraham.

difficult to say what can form a Divine sanction of the principle of a national Establishment.

Again, the Almighty declares that Abraham "will command his children and his household after him;" which means, as Dr. Gill expounds them, that he will command "not his own children only, but his servants also, all in his family; lay his injunctions on them, use his authority with them, give them all needful instructions, and take such methods with them, as would tend to propagate and preserve the true religion after his death." What plan he chose to accomplish this purpose is not stated, but it would have been consistent with that purpose, and therefore lawful, if he had provided them with regular and competent teachers. His descendants, however, were imbued with the same spirit, and acted in the same way; for we find Isaac charging his son not to take a wife of the idolatrous daughters of Canaan, and Jacob ordering his household to put away the strange gods from among them, and to accompany him to Bethel for the purpose of erecting an altar unto the true God, Gen. xxviii. 1; xxxv. 2, 3. Noah also offered sacrifice, and was a preacher of righteousness; and Job declares idolatry to be "an iniquity to be punished by the Judge," xxxi. 28. I do not dwell on these cases because of the difficulty of shewing the Divine approval of them, which is necessary to the validity of

the argument; but Melchisedek and Abraham are indisputable instances in the patriarchal age of rulers using their authority in support of religion, and that, too, with the Divine approbation¹.

3. A national religion was established among the Jews; with them Church and State were incorporated, formed one system of polity, and this by the especial appointment of the Almighty; hence a civil establishment of religion is not morally wrong. God cannot be the author of sin, nor can he expressly appoint what in itself is evil. If an Established Church were a thing absolutely unlawful, or in its own nature inconsistent with spiritual religion, he would not have instituted such a precedent. To assert the contrary would be to impeach the Divine wisdom and holiness; and it is of vast importance to be assured that institutions of religion are not abstractedly a moral evil.

But are we not further warranted to infer that they are, in the judgment of God himself, the most effectual provision for securing the ends both of society and of religion? An in-

¹ The reasoning under this head will be stronger when the Hebrew is correctly rendered; "For I esteem him, because that he will command (give strict orders and instructions to) his children and his posterity, so that they will keep the way of the Lord." The Hebrew scholar will at once see that this is the literal translation; see Rosenmüller, Schulz, Schumann, Noldius in למען, and Cocceii Lex. ed. Schulz in עד.

stitute which was best calculated to uphold the spiritual welfare of the Jewish people, should seem to be equally so in a Christian nation. In a moral and religious view the cases are parallel; both, however differing in ritual and externals, having the same end in view—the worship of the one true God; and if the union of the civil and ecclesiastical powers contributed to it in the one instance, why not in the other? Outward means and agencies are as indispensable to the propagation of religious truth under the Christian as under the Mosaic dispensation; and is it not presumption to suppose that erring man can substitute any better or more effective than those which were chosen by Omniscience?

Besides, the fact of a Divine appointment implies a continuance, unless it is afterwards abolished by the same infinite Power by which it was at first ordained. The Jewish polity, in which God allied his visible Church with the civil power was from heaven; and can we be justified in rejecting a similar alliance under the Gospel, without an equally undeniable warrant from heaven? The counsels of the Most High are immutable, and without some declaration to the contrary, what he has once certainly ordained must continue to be for ever binding. But the system which he once established of an union between the State and his visible Church, he has never expressly declared should cease; of its abrogation the Scriptures afford no evi-

dence; and, wanting this, we cannot but conclude that the counsels of God are in this case unchanged.

But the nationality of the Hebrew Church, say the objectors, was among the poor and beggarly elements which have been disannulled by the introduction of the new covenant. So far as regards the peculiarities of the law, its ceremonies, ritual, and civil enactments, it is freely confessed, we have no concern, Gal. iii. 25; Col. ii. 16, 17; Ephes. ii. 14, 15; Heb. vii. viii. x; but the spiritual part of the Sinaitic covenant, and "the commandments which are called moral," are unchangeable, and must endure for ever. If then agencies and means are absolutely necessary for the maintenance of religion in the world, to provide them must be a moral obligation; and they cannot be among the things intended to pass away. Some of these means are, and must for ever remain, the same as they were under the Levitical dispensation; such as the ordinance of public worship, the agency of a ministry, a provision for their support, and seminaries for their instruction. These, and other agencies employed under the Mosaic law, formed no part of its perishable nature; for they are now no less requisite for the propagation of the Gospel. It is therefore reasonable to infer that the enlisting the state in the service of religion, which is one of the most efficient of these agencies, still constitutes a religious duty.

It is, however, further alleged that the Jewish dispensation was a theocracy, a divine institute, altogether peculiar, and not capable of being imitated in its most essential principles; that between a divine and human establishment of religion, there is not only no adequate affinity or analogy, but such a dissimilarity, that the former furnishes no warrant for the latter. The answer is, that the Christian Church is, like the Mosaic dispensation, a divine institute, founded on miracles, reared by a super-human power, supported by the providence of God, and adapted to secure objects purely spiritual and moral. Agreeing, then, in the end and object, agreeing in the necessity of using external agencies for their propagation, and agreeing in the character of some of these agencies, why should they not agree also in the employment of the power of the State in the service of religion, as well as in the inculcation of the worship of the true God? The fact of the Israelitish government being a theocracy affords the strongest grounds for regarding the alliance of Church and State as one of those principles which were to be followed by a Christian people; since it proves that the example proposed, being truly and strictly divine, is most worthy of imitation.

This, it is said, will prove too much; since, if the Jewish system be taken as a pattern, it brings the obligation to imitate it consistently, by adopting all that was appointed and approved

under it: we cannot in reason follow so much of the example as suits our purpose, and reject the rest; we must adopt the whole or nothing. But what can be more inconsequential than to argue that, if imitation be allowed at all, it must extend to every thing practicable? It might with as much truth be urged, that those who feel themselves bound to obey the moral commandments of the Mosaic law must, to be consistent, be equally obligated to observe its ritual directions. If the objection be valid, it will lead to the absurd conclusion that, because the sacred writers propose the ancient worthies as our patterns in some respects, we are bound to imitate their conduct on all occasions: nay, that, because we are to have the apostles as ensamples, we must adopt the love-feasts, the kiss of charity, the community of goods, and all other practices of the apostolic age. The objection, therefore, proves too much; and moreover assumes that an example proposed for imitation *must* be followed in all its minutiae, which is contrary to fact and to common sense.

It has been contended that, as the Jewish dispensation was one of types and shadows which were to be done away by the coming of Christ, it can never be intended to furnish a precedent for religious establishments. It requires more than ordinary penetration to see how this can form a ground of objection. A person, event, or ordinance, may be typical in one view, and at

the same time exemplary, or imitable, in another; as Abraham is proposed as a pattern of faith, while his offering up Isaac adumbrated an all-sufficient sacrifice. And may it not be argued with more cogency that, as the Mosaic institutions were typical of things to come, Christianity should have a national establishment, with its priesthood and sacred ministrations, the true antitypes of the former? If nationality belonged to that which was only the type and the shadow, there would be no correspondency, unless the substance and antitype was nationally established.

The argument, then, for religious institutions derived from the example of the Jewish polity remains unshaken. The types and shadows of the law were fulfilled, its poor rudiments and ceremonial ordinances were abolished by Christ; but all that is spiritual and moral is of perpetual obligation. To support and encourage true religion will for ever remain a bounden duty; and is it not a daring presumption little short of open profanity to maintain that a better plan can be devised for the performance of this duty than the one which the wisdom of Jehovah appointed among his chosen people; not indeed in all its minuteness and peculiarity, but in its leading principle of taking the ministrations of religion under the protection of the State?

4. In appealing to the example of the kings and rulers of Israel, it is necessary, in order to

make the argument available, to show that they interfered in things belonging to the Church, not as a matter of personal holiness, but in their public and official capacity; that they did so, not by virtue of any peculiar privilege, but by such a right as is common to all other sovereign powers; and that such interference was with the divine approbation. These things being satisfactorily made out will prove, beyond all reasonable doubt, a divine warranty for the principle of an establishment.

David ordered the removing of the ark, 2 Sam. vi. 1. et seq.; xv. 25. et seq.; appointed the courses of the services of the priests, 1 Chron. xxiv. 3. and made preparations for the building of the temple: "I have *of mine own proper good*, of gold and silver, which I have given to the house of my God, *over and above all* that I have prepared for the holy house," &c. 1 Chron. xxix. 3. He here expressly distinguishes the contribution out of his own private property from the funds which he had prepared as king over Israel. This was a very large sum, 1 Chron. xxii. 14; and he also "commanded all the princes of Israel to help Solomon his son," &c. v. 17. This he did as head of the State, and the Lord declared to him, "Forasmuch as it was in thine heart to build an house for my name, thou didst well in that it was in thine heart," 2 Chron. vi. 8.

The design of erecting a temple, so long cherished by David, was successfully accomplished

by Solomon, who expended immense treasures in the undertaking: 1 Kings v. 11; ix. 11; 2 Chron. ii. 10. To meet this expenditure, he imposed a tax upon the state. "This is the reason of the levy which king Solomon raised; for to build the house of the Lord," &c. 1 Kings ix. 15; and he also levied a tribute upon the remnant of the Canaanitish nations who were left in the land, and "were not of the children of Israel;" v. 20, 21; 2 Chron. viii. 8. He likewise presided at the dedication of this magnificent structure, and diligently provided the things pertaining to the service of God; 2 Chron. viii. 14. All this was executed in his royal capacity; and that the Lord approved of it is evident from his sending fire from heaven to consume the king's burnt-offerings, and causing his "glory" to fill the house, 2 Chron. vii. 1.

Asa, who zealously exerted himself to put away the idols and altars of the strange gods out of all the land, 2 Chron. xiv. 3—15; xv. 16; and "*commanded* Judah to seek the Lord God of their fathers, and to do the law and the commandments," ch. xiv. 4. "did that which was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God," v. 2; and "his heart was perfect all his days;" ch. xv. 17.

Jehoshaphat reformed abuses in religion, 2 Chron. xvii. 6; sent his princes, and with them Levites and priests, "to teach in the cities of Judah," v. 7, 8; to which command they were

obedient, v. 9; and "proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah," ch. xx. 3. He acted in all this, not as an individual, but as a king, after the Lord had "stablished the kingdom in his hand," ch. xvii. 5; and "the Lord was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first ways of his father David, and sought not unto Baalim; but sought to the Lord God of his father, and walked in his commandments," ch. xvii. 3, 4.

Hezekiah removed idolatry out of the land, 2 Kings xviii. 4; repaired the temple, 2 Chron. xxix. 3; purged it from all defilement, v. 5. 15, 16; assembled the priests and Levites, and commanded them to sanctify the house of the Lord and to offer sacrifices, v. 5. 21. 27; along with the princes "commanded the Levites to sing praises with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer," v. 30; required all Israel and Judah, Ephraim and Manasseh, "to come to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem to keep the passover," ch. xxx. 2. et seq.; and this too not in the first month, as the law prescribed, but in the second, and was consequently the appointment of a festival by his own authority; yet it was acceptable to the Lord, v. 12. 20.—He also appointed the courses of the priests and Levites, ch xxxi. 2; ordered a provision for them, v. 4; and "in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart;" in consequence of which he "pros-

pered," v. 21; for "he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord," ch. xxix. 2.

Josiah purged Judah and Jerusalem from idolatrous rites, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 3; executed the repairs of the temple, v. 8. et seq.; gathered together all the elders, the priests, the Levites, and all the people; read "in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the house of the Lord," v. 29, 30; "caused all that were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand to it," v. 32; kept a passover, "set the priests in their charges, and made several orders and regulations concerning them," ch. xxxv. 1. et seq. In these things, it is clear he exercised his sovereign power, and thereby "did that which was right in the sight of the Lord," ch. xxxiv. 2.

That Ezra and Nehemiah exerted their authority for the reformation of abuses in religion, and for the establishment of the worship of God; that they were raised up for this purpose; and that the divine favour attended them, are facts which will not be disputed. And generally speaking we find that the kings had a sovereignty over the priests; 1 Sam. xxii. 12, 15; 1 Kings i. 33; 2 Chron. viii. 15; over the Levites; 1 Chron. xv. 4. et seq.; xvi. 4; 2 Chron. xxix. 30; and over the prophets; 1 Kings i. 23, 26, 27, 32, 33; and they suppressed and punished blasphemy, witchcraft, idolatry, and other offences against the law of the Lord; 1 Sam. xxviii. 9;

2 Kings xxiii. 24; 2 Chron. xxxiv. 4, 5; when the kings of Judah and Israel are reproved, it is not for their personal transgressions, but because they made the people of Israel to sin.

The Jewish sovereigns, it is demonstrably clear, exercised the royal power in things belonging to religion, and that, too, with the approbation of the Deity. The only way of avoiding the consequence which unavoidably follows, is by supposing that their conduct originated in the peculiar nature of their theocracy, and therefore cannot form an example to other rulers. But this plea has been obviated under the preceding number; the Scriptures do not afford the least intimation of any thing extraordinary in the case; we no where read that they acted by any extraordinary power, or by any extraordinary commission. None of them were, strictly speaking, prophets: and their acts concerning sacred matters are recorded simply, like other transactions, as the voluntary acts of the kings. As occasion required, they consulted those who were the acknowledged prophets of the Lord: and if in some cases they followed the advice of these inspired men, it is only what sovereigns may now do by acting according to the infallible directions of Christ and His apostles. There is no specific enactment giving to kings under the Old Testament any special authority in ecclesiastical matters; they were left to the free and uncontrolled exercise

of those general and common rights which belong to all supreme governors in states. In short, not a shadow of evidence exists for asserting that the kings of Israel and Judah, with respect to the royal prerogative, were differently circumstanced from other kings; or that they were under a stronger obligation to uphold the law of Moses, than sovereigns now are to uphold the law of Christ.

The protection of religion is of a moral character, and as such cannot be classed with those ceremonial ordinances which were abolished by the advent of our Lord. It is founded on reasons of a moral nature; and, having once the approbation of God, must continue permanently binding. The rulers of Israel interfered in sacred things, and not by virtue of any peculiar privilege; and since they were commended by Jehovah for so doing, their conduct must be regarded as so far a fit pattern for Christian monarchs. To represent their example, so approved in Scripture, as useless, as unworthy of imitation, is incompatible with a devout regard for the sacred writings. It is inconceivable why the zeal and efforts of good kings in promoting the worship of the true God should be recorded with such honourable mention except to excite the imitation of succeeding kings. The Old Testament, as well as the New, is our rule of faith and manners; for which reason, the examples it presents, not only without a syllable

of censure, without a hint of their being a Jewish peculiarity, without a word of caution against them, but in the strongest terms of commendation, must be intended as patterns. So says the apostle, who writes that "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope:" Rom. xv. 4; comp. ch. iv. 23; 1 Cor. x. 11; 2 Tim. iii. 16; James v. 10. From the example, then, of godly rulers under the Mosaic law, we may infer the duty of Christian governors to promote Christianity, by using all the means which their authority places within their reach.

5. As the end of civil society is to procure for the citizens whatever constitutes real happiness, so the object of all good government is to promote it in the greatest possible degree. The "chief good" of man, as a compounded being, has a relation both to temporal and eternal interests. To the former nothing is so conducive as religion; of all agents in the civilization of mankind, and ameliorating their condition, it is unquestionably the most efficient, inasmuch as it proposes the only permanently influential motives for obedience to the laws and the practice of virtue, upon which the peace, the welfare, and the happiness of society depend; to the latter it is the one thing needful. It belongs, then, to the sovereign, as invested with

power only for the sake of securing the good of the community, to give every encouragement to true religion, which constitutes the greatest good of the subjects both as to this world and the next.

By the law of nature, the care of religion attaches to the office of the magistrate, as the guardian of the public civil good. The church state, as well as every other social state, has its foundation in that law; what it directs unto, as Dr. Owen remarks, may receive new enforcements by revelation, but changed, or altered, or abolished, it cannot be¹. By the fundamental principles of this law, it devolves upon the magistrate to cherish, to protect, and to propagate religion. In this respect, the Christian revelation has made no difference; the same right which the civil ruler had under the law of nature, he still retains under the gospel dispensation. Christ has not by any positive command prohibited him from interfering in matters of religion; there is nothing in His laws incompatible with such interference; and, therefore, whether we consider the end and design of his

¹ Works, vol. 20, p. 75; so p. 90. See his "Short Catechism," in vol. 19; Stebbing, Essay, &c. in tracts. The same right of the magistrate is asserted by the best writers on the Law of Nature and Nations; Grotius, *Concord. veræ Polit. cum Relig.* c. 1, n. 13. Puffendorf, *De Jure Nat. et Gent.* lib. 7, cap. 9, § 4; Vattel, *Law of Nations*, Prelim., and lib. 1, chap. 12.

office, or the natural rights belonging to it, the duty devolves upon him, as conservator of the good of the community, to encourage religion.

The only difficulty is, in what way he is to promote it. He cannot personally teach and inculcate the doctrines of the gospel; for that is the office of the Christian ministry; he cannot engraft them in the heart, for that is the office of the Holy Spirit; religion, in short, as an inward principle, is quite beyond his control. In no other way, then, can he promote it than by the influence of his example, and by providing whatever is requisite for instruction in its truths, and for the performance of its services. All provisions of human laws refer to outward actions: and those respecting religion must consequently relate to that which is external, as the erection of churches, the payment of ministers, and the like. If the civil ruler be bound to patronize religion, he must of necessity make choice of some such outward mode, the only one within his power. The argument, then, stands thus: It is the duty of the sovereign to promote the good of society: religion, the best gift of God to man, is the chief good of society: the sovereign, therefore, is bound to use all the means he possesses of promoting it; but no other than external means are within his power: consequently, he is bound to employ them for the advancement of religion.

This inference it is attempted to evade in

different ways. Some, compelled by the force of truth, admit the premises, and own that it is the duty of the sovereign and of all subordinate authorities to employ their power and influence for the support and diffusion of religion. "He may bring his authority to aid the Divine laws, by commanding his subjects to perform certain religious observances, and by conferring especial marks of favour on those who are the most zealous and active in their compliance; and he may employ a portion of the public funds intrusted to his administration in erecting and furnishing places of worship, in printing and circulating the Bible, and what he may judge the best books of human composure; in training to due qualification persons who shall teach Divine truths and human duties; in securing to them the means of subsistence while they devote their whole lives to those pious and benevolent labours; in conferring upon them special honours and advantages¹." But, conceding all this, it is contended that by establishing religion, the sovereign defeats his object; instead of promoting it, he inflicts upon it an unspeakable injury; instead of strengthening its influence, he does much to produce an entire

¹ Dr. Pye Smith, *Append. to Sermon*, p. 27. So in his "Letters." Most of the older Nonconformists held the same opinion; as for instance, Calamy, *Defence of Moderate Nonconformity*, vol. ii. p. 28; et seq. where he makes equally liberal concessions.

disruption of all that binds man either to his Creator or to one another.

It is surprising how any should fail to perceive that such reasoning cannot invalidate the principle of an Establishment. Civil rulers may espouse erroneous plans, they may adopt injudicious methods in reference to religion; but this circumstance does not overthrow their *right* to adopt some means or other. A measure, for instance, may be introduced into Parliament, which may be shown to be likely to inflict unspeakable injury on society; yet it would be absurd to convert it into an argument against the right of Parliament to pass it. The objection, then, can at the most only make against the *expediency* of a national religion; and every argument on this ground, so far from denying, admits the magistrate's *right* to establish it; which is granting all that is contended for in this Chapter.

The utility of Establishments is another matter; but capable of proof, as I conceive, little short of demonstration. Human means are the appointed instruments for advancing religion in the world; and it would be absurd to suppose their efficacy is lost when employed by governments. The religious instruction of the people, the circulation of the Scriptures, the erection of Churches, the education of youth for the ministry, the maintenance of qualified ministers, the providing such things as are requisite for

the due administration of sacred rites are indispensable to the existence of religion in a state; and their utility must remain whether they are furnished by individuals or by the supreme power. If their utility vanished through the mere circumstance of being supplied by civil rulers, men in power would, as regards the duty of promoting religion, be in a worse situation than private persons. Hard indeed would it be, if it were impossible for the magistrate to bring all his energies and all his expedients towards effecting that without which no government can subsist. He who in a private station is able and is bound to contribute all he can to the advancement of religion, will doubtless be able to do it more effectively when raised to rank and power; and if, as the objection admits, it be his duty to use all the means within his reach for this purpose, all is admitted which our present line of argument requires.

Others again, making the same concessions, introduce a different qualification—that the sovereign may and ought to do all for religion he can without doing wrong, may contribute every thing in his power which does not involve a violation of equity towards other persons. This is more specious, but in reality it comes to the same thing. The staunchest defenders of Establishments abhor all compulsory methods, and reject with as much indignation as their opponents, any support which is morally wrong or

unjust; but, in their belief, the magistrate's protection of a particular Church is neither one nor the other. If he believes it to be scriptural, and for that reason favours it with his patronage, and supports it to the extent of his influence without trenching upon the freedom of others, where is the wrong? If he bestows upon it a portion of the funds legitimately placed in his hands for state objects, where is the injustice? Were these funds contributed on the condition that they should not be applied to such a purpose, there would in that case be a gross breach of trust; but being intrusted to him in order to provide for the public good, he must judge for himself what will be best for the good of the state; for the highest power in it must in some degree be discretionary; and, in applying a part of the national resources to what he conceives to be the highest of national interests, he only does what he believes to be right and just; he only expends in the way he thinks best the funds which the nation has placed at his disposal; and in so doing he cannot fairly be accused of injustice. Much less can he be so in maintaining inviolate the endowments and privileges of a Church already established. To deprive either individuals or corporate societies of their possessions, without a full indemnification, is a wrong and robbery the most iniquitous.

Lastly, an attempt is made to show that the

argument proves too much. Many things, it is said, tending to the good of society cannot be the subject of legislation. It is for the good of society that all the relative duties of life should be performed, that men should be grateful, compassionate, industrious, economical, that, in short, all the Christian virtues should be exhibited in practice, yet what can government do towards effecting it? Now government, it is true, can only look at that which is outward, and there are many things of the first importance which they cannot reach; nor was ever statesman so visionary as to think of enforcing the inward moral principles by any direct legislation. But they may be fostered and encouraged by external means; and, as far as these are available, governments are bound to adopt them. And this is the universal practice; for in all nations laws exist relating to the reciprocal obligations of prince and subject, husband and wife, parent and child, master and servant; enactments are passed for the encouragement of industry, trade, agriculture, commerce; universities are endowed, schools founded, and various plans devised by the legislature for the moral and intellectual instruction of the rising generation. Whatever contributes to the preservation, the peace, and comfort of society, it is the magistrate's duty to promote to the extent of his power; and, since nothing is so efficacious for these objects as true

religion, he is especially bound to supply those means and agencies, without which it can make no progress, nor even keep a footing in the land.

Upon the whole, then, the argument is not open to any valid objection. If it be, as it assuredly is, the duty of the sovereign to provide for the good of the community, he must be under an obligation the most sacred to provide for the maintenance of religion, which is its greatest good. His power, it is true, is limited to the adoption of external means; what kind they ought to be is not now the question; nor how far they may, or may not be effectual; the argument is, and in this respect its validity is unquestionable, that civil rulers not only may lawfully, but that it is their paramount duty to, employ all the privileges and resources in their power to extend Christianity among the people.

6. The same inference follows from religion considered as a personal concern. The very profession of Christianity, if serious, implies the duty of extending its influence by every practicable mode; and, consequently, of employing whatever worldly advantages Providence has vouchsafed us for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom. All that we have and are, our mental and bodily powers, our fortunes, our stations, our rank, our privileges, are the Lord's; his they are, and to him they belong; we are no more than stewards; and they are entrusted to us solely that we may use them to the honour

and glory of God, and to the benefit of our fellow-creatures. There is no exception; "the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof;" and all hold their possessions as a trust for which they are accountable. But as much will be required of those to whom much is given, Luke xii. 48. the larger our wealth, the higher our rank and influence, the greater is our obligation to fulfil the requirements of our stewardship. Earthly sovereigns, having much committed to their charge, are bound to recognize the sovereignty of the Almighty, to acknowledge their own absolute subjection, and, as servants and trustees, to devote their legitimate privileges and powers to the service of their Lord. Besides their personal example and private resources, they have other means at their disposal; and the allegiance due to their heavenly Master requires the employment of them to the glory of God, and the promotion of true religion. This they can only do by some visible support and patronage; and as the Gospel truth cannot be disseminated without secular instruments and agencies, it becomes their personal and transcendently important duty to exert the prerogatives of their office to supply them; which, in whatever way it is effected, constitutes essentially an union between the civil and ecclesiastical power.

7. To encourage virtue, and to discountenance vice, is a duty devolving upon kings and governors, not only from their office to consult

the good of the community, but also from the revealed will of God. "The throne is established by righteousness," Prov. xvi. 12. "A wise king scattereth the wicked, and bringeth the wheel over them," ch. xx. 26. "Take away the wicked from before the king, and his throne shall be established in righteousness," ch. xxv. 5. Governors are sent "for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well," 1 Pet. ii. 14. With believers in revelation there will be no dispute that the most efficacious mode of attaining this object is the inculcation and enforcement of Christian principles; in other words, by the moral and religious instruction of the people. But as this requires the agency of secular aids, the supreme ruler is consequently bound to use his best exertions to provide them.

8. The sovereign, in the exercise of his official duties, cannot as a Christian lay aside the authority of Christ; but must, in various instances, legislate with a view to enforce the precepts of the Gospel. In several matters which relate to the observance of the moral law; in the punishment of crimes, as adultery, swearing, perjury, and indeed in the formation of the whole penal code; in regulations concerning marriage, slavery, and other relations of social life; in the frequency and manner of taking oaths, which derive their sanctity from religion, and without which neither life nor property could be safe, legislators, as Christians, must interpose; and

their laws must not only be made to conform with, but be so modelled as to invite obedience to, the laws of God. They cannot consistently with their duty act otherwise ; but in every such instance it is acting upon the principle of establishments, which, being unavoidable, cannot be opposed to the will of God. Whenever they regulate their official conduct with the design of enforcing the laws of Christ, they direct the power of the State to the support of religion ; and, as this *must* in some cases take place with Christian rulers, it proves the principle of establishments to be accordant with Christianity.

9. In adverting to the example of Christ, we first observe that he was born and lived under a Church Establishment ; to that he conformed ; with that he held communion ; he submitted to its civil and ecclesiastical rulers ; he frequented the temple and the synagogue ; he joined in the public services ; and directed the people to listen to them who "sat in Moses' seat." This, it is said, gives no countenance to religious institutions, since Jesus, as "born under the law," was in subjection to the ancient economy while it subsisted, in order "to fulfil all righteousness." But can it be imagined that he would sanction by his conduct that which is a moral evil ? Our reverence for his spotless character forbids such a supposition. His example, moreover, is held out to us as all-perfect, which it cannot be, if in practice he voluntarily complied with a system

utterly at variance with the genius of the religion he came to promulgate to the world. We are exhorted to learn of him, Matt. xi. 29; to be like-minded with him, Phil. ii. 5—7; Rom. xv. 5; “to walk even as he walked,” 1 John ii. 6; to “follow his steps,” 1 Pet. ii. 21; and he declares, “I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you,” John xiii. 15. Strange indeed, if Christ is to be a pattern to us, as far as human infirmity will admit, and yet we cannot lawfully imitate him in his conforming to an establishment.

But not to insist upon this; the present argument rests not so much upon his conformity as upon his silence. In Judea, Church and State were one polity, divinely instituted; and kings and governors, as well as all others, were commended for their adherence to it. The people whom our Lord addressed were accustomed to such a polity, and venerated it; the early converts must have regarded it as consecrated by the appointment of the Almighty; and Christ, as omniscient, must have foreseen that his disciples in all succeeding ages would appeal to it as a pattern for their imitation; yet not a word does he let fall adverse to the principle of that polity. If he had intended to forbid the interposition of the civil power in behalf of the Church under the Gospel economy, how are we to account for his silence? If such had been his design, it is most wonderful, taking the circum-

stances above enumerated into consideration, that he did not explicitly declare it, for he had abundant opportunities of doing so ; but neither in the Gospels, nor in any other part of the New Testament, have we any express declaration against an alliance of Church and State.

This is the more remarkable, as he took frequent occasion to correct their erroneous views of the Levitical dispensation, to rectify their carnal notions concerning it, to inveigh against its corruptions, and to intimate the abrogation of the ritual and ceremonial part. But he neither asserts nor insinuates that an establishment would be unlawful under the Gospel ; nor ever uses language which could induce his followers to think that the union of Church and State is incompatible with the spirituality of his kingdom. There is a manifest difference of conduct in the two cases ; which, as proceeding from infinite wisdom, must have been designed ; but what could that design be, except to show that this union was *not* one of the carnal and ceremonial ordinances to be abolished under the Gospel ? As such an union did then exist, and that by the appointment of God, the conclusion cannot well be avoided, that no change in this respect was intended ; since he has not vouchsafed any unequivocal intimation to the contrary, and has moreover actually sanctioned it by his example.

10. The conduct of St. Paul, when brought

before the Roman governors Felix and Festus in conjunction with Agrippa, is worthy of observation. He is indicted for being "a pestilent fellow," and "a mover of sedition, and a ring-leader of the sect of the Nazarenes;" for being a profaner of the temple; and for teaching doctrines adverse to the law, Acts xxiv. 5, 6; xxv. 18, 20. Thus the crimes laid to his charge were partly of a civil, and partly of a religious nature: to the former he pleads not guilty, ch. xxiv. 12, 13, 18, 19, 20; the latter he explains, and as far as true vindicates, v. 14, 15, 16, 21. How are we to account for this, if the apostle disallowed any authority to the magistrate in matters of religion? Why was he so careful to justify himself from the ecclesiastical charge, if he knew that by the law of Christ the civil judge had no right to interfere or decide concerning his religious behaviour? Why did he not tell them, what would have been much more to the purpose, that, as far as religion was concerned, they had nothing to do with the accusation? Yet he drops not so much as a hint to this effect; and, though so good an opportunity was thus afforded for explaining the true nature of Christ's Church and Kingdom, he makes no objection to the governor's interference in the case, which was certainly in part religious. Nay, he even admits it in saying, "I stand at Cesar's judgment-seat, where I *ought to be judged*," ch. xxv. 10. Neither the words nor the context admit of limiting the

declaration to that part of the charge which was of a civil description; the charge itself included the other, which was of a religious nature; and of course the apostle's declaration refers to both; which is a plain acknowledgment of Cesar's jurisdiction in matters religious as well as civil.

11. So far the argument has been based upon the doctrines and duties set forth in holy writ; our attention must now be directed to some particular texts; and first, to Exod. xx. 8—11. Having in another work fully treated of the ¹ Sabbath, its Divine institution and perpetual obligation may be here taken for granted; and this the more readily, as the inference intended now to be drawn, mainly rests upon the expressions, "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates." Nothing less can be intended by this, than that every man is to keep the Sabbath holy himself, and to cause all over whom he has any influence to sanctify it by abstaining from work. With respect to the stranger, the law would be nugatory, unless he, within whose gates the stranger resides, has authority to compel obedience. The commandment to exert this authority admits no

¹ The Christian Sabbath, or an Inquiry into the Religious Obligation of keeping holy One Day in Seven.

exception; from the monarch to the meanest, all are included. The sovereign upon the throne is here enjoined both to rest on that day himself, and to cause as far as may be all others "within his gates" to rest likewise; a plain and express commandment to exert his sovereign power to enforce the observance of a religious ordinance.

Dissenters, who act consistently, deny without reserve the right of human legislation in the matter; but many of them, startled at the consequences of leaving the Sabbatical ordinance without the protection of the laws, make a distinction between its spiritual and secular objects. The former, say they, cannot come under the cognizance of human laws, while the latter may; and the magistrate is competent to superintend and enjoin the rest and civil purposes for which God appointed it. But the language of the record is such that the one part of the institution cannot be disjoined from the other, and that as a whole, it is strictly and unequivocally a religious institute. Nor is it possible in legislation entirely to separate the spiritual from the secular ends of the Sabbath; for the temporal interests of man are so interwoven with religion, that whatever promotes the one tends directly to promote the other. Besides, without disputing the two-fold character of the Sabbath, enough is admitted in the objection itself to answer the purposes of the argument; for it is acknow-

ledged to be a Divine mandate in both characters, and if the magistrate has a *right* to enforce the one, he has the same *right* to enforce the other: and a right to enforce *any* religious command in *any* respect, is in reality that kind of interference in spiritual matters which forms the foundation of all ecclesiastical establishments.

Other Dissenters, aware that the admission of a legislative power to any extent, in regard to a Divine institute, is virtually giving up their cause, assert that the magistrate is not to have respect to the sanctification of the day, but “as a prudent and discreet judge, since many of the subjects will, from religious views, sanctify the first day of the week at all events; he will make *his* day of *civil* rest coincide with *their* day of sacred rest¹.” Now, for what purpose is this coincidence to be made? Clearly in order that the sanctification of the Sabbath may be promoted. But every exercise of legal authority, with a view to promote religion, is just that very exercise of power for the lawfulness of which we are contending.

In no way, then, can the inference be evaded which results from the Sabbatical law. It not merely gives permission to human legislators to enact a cessation from labour on the seventh day, but makes it incumbent upon them both to

¹ Glasg. Vol. Ch. Lect. i. p. 28.

do that, and, as far as their authority reaches, to cause a general compliance with those spiritual objects for which it was designed; which exercise of secular authority in spiritual matters forms the principle of ecclesiastical establishments.

12. The second Psalm, which is proved beyond all doubt to be prophetic of Christ, by Acts iv. 25, begins with representing the kings of the earth, and its rulers, as taking counsel "against the Lord and against his anointed;" and, after describing the utter discomfiture of their designs, concludes with this admonition: "Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little," v. 10—12. As the first part of the Psalm reprehends kings and rulers for combining in their magisterial character against Christ, so is the second part to be understood as an admonition to them in the same character. In Acts also the words of the Psalm are applied expressly to the confederacy of the Jewish and Roman rulers against the Saviour; "for of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together," iv. 27. The Gentiles and the people of Israel, it is evident, could only manifest their hostility as

individuals; but Herod and Pontius Pilate, to whom the application of the words is also made, we know actually did it in their public capacity as rulers.

Kings and rulers, then, are admonished in their public capacities to "serve the Lord with fear, and to rejoice with trembling;" to serve and obey him, to yield a dutiful submission to him with religious reverence. "Kiss the Son," that is, as kissing was an act of homage, a token of submission, 1 Sam. x. 1. 1 Kings xix. 18, acknowledge him for your sovereign, and, as servants and subjects, labour to promote his honour and interests. This is the genuine and unforced sense of the words; and it is a declaration of the Divine will that kings and rulers, as such, instead of opposing Christ, should bow with dutiful submission to his authority; and, as his vassals, exercise their powers for the advancement of his spiritual kingdom.

13. We have no express Scriptural authority for referring the 72nd Psalm to Christ; but as many of the expressions are exclusively suitable to the Messiah, we must conclude that, in describing the peaceable reign of his Son, the Psalmist portrays the happiness and blessings of the Messiah's future kingdom, when "the kings of Tarshish, and of the isles, shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him; ver. 10,

11. It was the custom of tributary princes to offer "presents" and "gifts," to the kings who conquered them, or to whom they owed subjection, though they still retained authority over their own subjects; 1 Kings iv. 21. The words of the Psalmist then are descriptive of that homage which kings, as kings, were to pay to Christ; which necessarily includes an exercise of royal authority, calculated to uphold the outward condition of his church in the world.

14. In turning to the prophetic books, we read in Isaiah: "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I will lift up my hand to the Gentiles, &c. And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet," ch. xlix. 22, 23. The prophet in this passage unquestionably refers to the outward fortunes of the Christian Church, and describes the flourishing state of it when kings should become its "nursing fathers," and their queens its "nursing mothers." It is not material to ascertain the precise import of these expressions; it is sufficient for the argument to grant, as clearly it must, that they undeniably imply *some* nurture, *some* fostering care, *some* support, which kings and queens should extend to the Church. And, as they are spoken of in connexion with the Gentiles and the people, it must be meant that they should extend it in their regal office and

capacity; which proves all that it is intended to evince in this chapter, the right of kings to interfere in what concerns the temporal condition of the Church¹.

15. In the 60th chapter Isaiah is foretelling a glorious state of Christ's kingdom, when nations and kings should come to "the brightness of its rising," ver. 3, when "the forces (rather the wealth) of the Gentiles," should come unto it; when "gold and incense" should be brought, ver. 6. 10.; when "strangers" should build up the walls of the Church, and "their kings should minister unto it;" ver. 10.; and when "the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish," ver. 12. Here, then, both nations and their rulers are represented as submitting themselves unreservedly to the Messiah, as obnoxious to punishment if they did not, as contributing gold, and silver, and property, and employing the various resources under their controul, for the protection and augmentation of the Church.

¹ A writer more bold than effective, complains that the advocates for establishments, omit the pronoun "their" in citing this text; since "it proves that the queens spoken of in the prophecy are not those who in legal language are termed *regnant*, but those who are termed *consort*; in other words, that it is not in their public but in their private capacity that both the kings and the queens are mentioned;" Marshall, Eccles. Estab. p. 97. This does not alter the case; the passage still proves that kings and *their* queens in their respective stations were to uphold the Church. But the pronoun may refer to the "Gentiles" and "peoples" mentioned in the preceding verse.

16. The vision of Ezekiel's temple, ch. xl.—xlviii., is of a most mysterious character; but if it refer, as it is reasonable to suppose, to the general prevalence of Christianity, to the Christian Church, and its spiritual services, the prince is introduced as settling the affairs of the church, as bearing the expenses of its worship; and a stated proportion of land is allotted for the subsistence of the ministers; all which particulars are full to our purpose, if the prophecy relate to the times of the Messiah.

17. The whole tenor of the prophecies which relate to the conversion of the nations to the Christian faith, makes strongly for national establishments. "God addresses the nations in a collective capacity, reproves them for their idolatry, and calls them to his worship, Isa. xxxiv. 1.; xli. 1. 21—29. He proposes Christ as his anointed servant to them; ch. xlii. 1.; declares that he has given him the nations for his inheritance, and that he shall inherit them all; Psal. ii. 8.; lxxii. 8.; Isa. lii. 15.; lv. 5. Christ addresses himself not only to individuals, but to whole islands, Isa. xlix. 1.; nations join themselves to him, own and worship him, Isa. ii. 2.; Micah. iv. 1, 2.; Zech. ii. 11.; viii. 20, 22.; bless themselves, and glory in him, Jer. iv. 2.; all nations and dominions serve him, Dan. vii. 14, 27.; they consecrate all things in them, and employ them in his service, Isa. lx. 6—12.; Zech. xiv. 20, 21.; he owns these nations as

his, and blesses them, while he breaks in pieces, and wastes others." Ps. xxxiii. 12.; cxlv. 15; Isa. xix. 25; Ps. ix. 12.; Isa. lx. 12¹.

Is it possible for any impartial mind to peruse and reflect upon the passages referred to, without being convinced that they imply a *national* profession of Christianity? Now, "nations" and "individuals" are not convertible terms; nor is a "society," however numerous and extensive, a nation. The word "nation" denotes a country and population in the aggregate; and consequently the nations here spoken of, are not spoken of as consisting of individuals, but in their complex and corporate capacities. A nation in this capacity can only act through the medium of its government; nor can any thing be properly called a national act which is performed otherwise than by the government. Until Christianity is publicly recognized by the governing powers, and until this recognition is sanctioned by the law of the land, a nation, as a nation, does not make profession of a belief in Christ. The predictions, therefore, that the Christian religion was to be acknowledged and protected in a *national* way, can only receive their accomplishment in the acknowledgment and protection of it by the respective governments of the nations.

To the inference deduced in this and the two

¹ Dr. M'Crie, Statement, &c. p. 32.

preceding sub-sections, from the prophetic anticipations of the success of the Gospel, it has been objected, that prophecy was not intended to be a rule of duty, either to kings or their subjects; for, if we may argue the lawfulness of doing what is predicted, it would, if followed out, often authorize what is absurd, and even sanction the commission of crime.—No doubt the lawfulness of a thing cannot be grounded upon the mere fact of its having been foretold; but when it is foretold as forming part of a glorious state of things—a state described in terms of manifest approbation—it then becomes equivalent to a command. When various particulars are enumerated as belonging to that which is declared to be a blessing, these particulars, as parts of a whole, have the Divine approbation. And this is the case in the prophecies under consideration. They point to a happy and glorious state of the church, when nations should flow into it, should cherish and support it, which can only take place in their corporate capacities by incorporating it with the state. They describe the conversion of kings and rulers, their nurturing care and protection of it; and in declaring what sovereigns will do, in order to produce this flourishing state, they declare what God would have them to do. It is contrary to every rule of sound interpretation to limit the predictions to what they ought to do as individuals, apart from their office; reference is made

to their conduct as kings in contradistinction to their subjects, and to the power and influence which, as kings, they were to possess in promoting the external prosperity of Christ's kingdom. We cannot, therefore, resist the conclusion that it is the will of God, as well for a king in his station as for the people in theirs, to do their utmost for the good of the church.

18. In Romans xiii. 4, 6, the civil magistrate is called "the minister of God;" but how can he by any possibility be so, if, as a magistrate, he lays wholly out of account "the things of God?" A servant is bound to protect the interests of his master; and such a designation being given to the civil ruler, implies an equal care on his part for the honour of his great Lord and Master. He derives his authority from God, "for there is no power but of God;" and in the exercise of it he is God's minister; the relation, therefore, in which he stands to God imposes the obligation to consult the interests of God's worship in all his official acts. Again; he is stated to be the minister of God "for good;" it is not said for temporal good, but good absolutely; he is bound to promote whatever can contribute to the real good of his subjects; and it would be putting an unwarrantable restriction upon the meaning of the words to exclude that which tends to the good of their souls. Besides, the religious and the social duties are so closely connected with each other,

that he who is authorized to consult for the one class, is, to a certain degree, authorized to consult for the other. Hence the magistrate, being "the minister of God for good, is bound by his office to provide for the religious instruction of the people, and for the maintenance of religious ordinances among them; for without these, he does not provide for their real good.

19. Governors are stated by St. Peter, 1 Pet. ii. 14. to be sent "for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well." That by "praise" is meant *reward* as well as commendation, is plain from its being opposed to *punishment* in the former clause, and from the application of the word, Rom. ii. 29; xiii. 3.¹ But every Christian magistrate will acknowledge that those who devote their lives and talents to the propagation of the Gospel "do well;" and consequently are those whom it is his duty to reward and remunerate. Now the lawfulness of *any* interference for the support of religion justifies the principle of an Establishment.

20. The Christian law for the support of those who minister in the Church is thus laid down: "Who goeth a warfare at any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard and

¹ "Επαινος vi oppos. τῆς ἐδικ. et ex usu loqu. etiam bene Græcis satis trito, pro *præmio*, ut *ἐπαινῶ* pro *præmiis afficere*. Pott, in N. T. edit. Koppiana. See also Schleusner in voc.

eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we shall reap your carnal things? Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel," 1 Cor. ix. 7—14. "This brief extract," says a zealous partizan, "which might be corroborated by many other passages of similar import, comprehends the fundamental principles of that Establishment which Christ himself has set up¹." And what should forbid a sovereign, in his official character, from concurring in, and supporting, that system which Christ has established? The maintenance of the preachers of the Gospel is represented by the Apostle as a matter of right on their part; which of course implies a corresponding obligation upon all Christians; and therefore upon Christian princes as much as upon the people under them. All, in their respective stations, are obligated to maintain that establishment which Christ has set up; but how can this obligation be fulfilled by a king, unless he supports it as a king with the resources of his kingly power?

¹ Marshall, Eccles. Establ. Considered, p. 172.

The right, moreover, of preachers to a maintenance is mentioned as one which might be enforced; "If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless, we have not used this power," ver. 12. comp. 2 Thess. iii. 8, 9. It will be seen by a perusal of this, with the entire context, that the right of maintenance forms a law of Christianity; what harm, then, can there be in making it part and parcel of the law of the land? Christian rulers are bound to legislate in conformity to the laws of Christ; and, in assigning a permanent revenue to the support of the ministry, do they not act in perfect accordance with this obligation? Since the ministers of the Gospel are to be maintained at the expense of the people, what should forbid its being sanctioned by the State;—for what is the decree of the State but the will of the people constitutionally expressed? The Christian law in reference to this subject is accompanied with no exceptions; Christian governors are no less bound by it than other individuals; and are therefore bound, in compliance with the Lord's ordinance, to endeavour "that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel." They, as well as private Christians, are to allow those who sow unto them "spiritual things" to reap their "carnal things," and to "communicate to him that teacheth in all good things." Granting it to be a law of the Gospel to provide for the

ministry, magistrates in Christian countries must act in obedience to it in their magisterial capacity, which is a substantial interference of the secular power in matters of religion.

21. Again, the Apostle in claiming the right of maintenance for Christian ministers, builds an argument upon the institution of the Levitical law: "Saith not the law the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn," 1 Cor. ix. 8., so also in ver. 13. In this reasoning, St. Paul assumes the reasonableness and propriety of the law relating to the support of the priesthood, otherwise his argument would rest upon an unsound basis. A tacit assent is often the strongest evidence; and the Apostle clearly takes it for granted, that the Levitical enactments referred to are just and right; which amounts to an approval of the principle of an Establishment. But he does more than this; he expressly declares it to be written on our account: "For our sakes, no doubt, this is written; that he that ploweth should plow in hope," &c. ver. 10. The law cited being given "for our sakes," must in some way or other have an application to Christian believers; and the Apostle must have both acquiesced in its justice and have approved of adopting it, or at least some law similar in principle, under the Gospel. Now to approve a law for the maintenance of the Chris-

ian ministry, is to approve the principle of an ecclesiastical Establishment.

22. St. Paul, though he insisted upon the right of maintenance, declares to the Corinthians that he preached to them "the Gospel of God freely," "without charge," "without becoming burthensome to them," 1 Cor. ix. 12, 15, 18.; 2 Cor. xi. 7. 9.; xii. 13. The same plan he followed in other places, 1 Thess. ii. 9.; 2 Thess. iii. 8, 9. St. Paul having suffered the loss of all things for the sake of his Divine Master, was, like the other Apostles, poor and destitute; and must have been supported by the liberality of others, of which he records some instances. Writing to the Corinthians, he says, "When I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man; for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied," 2 Cor. xi. 9. And to the Philippians: "When I departed from Macedonia no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity," Phil. iv. 15, 16. Here is an undeniable fact that the Apostle, while preaching the Gospel in one place, received his maintenance from certain persons who lived at a distance; which shews in the clearest manner that it is agreeable to the law of the Gospel to provide for the religious instruction of others. If the Apostle had known that ministers ought

to be maintained only by the voluntary contributions of their flocks, he would not have consented, while proclaiming the tidings of salvation to the Corinthians, to be supported by the Macedonians or Philippians. His receiving their liberality is full proof that he sanctioned a provision for the preachers of the Gospel supplied by others than those to whom it is immediately preached. Nor does it make any difference whether it be supplied by a Roman Pretor or a Grecian Archon, by private persons or the governors of Macedonia and Philippi; and if it be right for individuals to provide for the religious instruction of their neighbours, it must be right in kings to provide it for their subjects.

23. The same Apostle says, "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him," Col. iii. 17. This injunction is addressed to all, to governors and the governed; it being the duty of all, without any exception, both in every discourse and in every transaction to speak and act "in the name of the Lord Jesus." Whether this be explained to mean *for the sake of Jesus, suitably to his will and doctrine, to the honour of his name, with a view to please him, &c.*, it must be understood as enjoining believers to have respect to Christ in every word and deed; and if so, the civil magistrate, as a Christian, must do the same in

all his official acts, and regulate them so as to promote the Saviour's honour and religion.

24. This is further apparent from the precept, "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God," 1 Cor. x. 31.; which commands Christians in *whatever* they do, in any way, in any capacity, to consult the glory of God; and if individuals are to do so in their private business and transactions, it is equally the duty of kings and governors to do the same in the exercise of their high functions. But *any* royal and magisterial act the direct object of which is to promote the glory of God, is just that very interference in religious matters which constitutes the principle of an Establishment.

25. Christians are exhorted to pray "for kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty," 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2. The object of prayers for kings is that we may not only enjoy "a quiet and peaceable life," but also "in all godliness and honesty;" both these objects, therefore, kings are bound to promote. Now, the religious obligation of "the powers that be" to promote godliness, establishes the right and duty for which we are contending.

26. In the Revelations we find the prophetic declarations that "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever," ch. xi. 15.; that "the earth helped the

woman," ch. xii. 15, 16.; that "the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it, (*i. e.* of the Lamb, ver. 23.), and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it—and shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it," ch. xxi. 24, 25. It will be granted, and this is all that the argument requires, that here are announcements of important changes, when nations and their rulers should acknowledge and act in subjection to the Lord. Now, kingdoms in their aggregate capacities, can only "become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ," when their governments, as such, make a national profession of Christianity, as observed, No. 17. "The earth" is the symbol of the State, and the "woman" of the church; and the former is to *help* the latter. The last cited passage seems to be decisive as to the duty of kings to "bring their glory and honour" to the church; that is, to employ their rank and dignity, their wealth, authority, and power in order to maintain and defend it.

The result of the preceding discussion is, that civil rulers not only have a *right* to interfere, but *are bound* to act in their magisterial capacity upon the principles of Christianity, and to promote its influence among the people. Their power, however, extends only to the outward condition of religion in the world; and they can no otherwise promote its influence

than by providing the *external means* for instruction in its doctrines, for the performance of its services, and for inducing obedience to its laws. What these means ought to be is another question ; but their duty, as Christian governors and legislators, is to employ all the resources within their reach to provide them ; and admitting the interposition of the civil power in favour of religion, no matter to what extent, it establishes *the principle* of ecclesiastical institutions.

CHAPTER III.

THE PRINCIPLES WHICH SHOULD GUIDE THE CIVIL MAGISTRATE IN ESTABLISHING A RELIGION.

1. Having ascertained on Scriptural authority, that the civil magistrate has a right and is bound to interpose in matters of religion, we must now determine upon the same authority the principles by which he should be guided in the discharge of this duty.

2. It is obviously a duty, the performance of which is confined within the boundaries of the kingdom or province over which he presides. An Establishment being the grant of civil privileges, cannot be extended beyond the limits of the magistrate's civil jurisdiction, without an infringement of the rights of independent states. Scriptural evidence will hereafter be produced for National Churches, and it is desirable that the subjects of each temporal sovereignty should live in a spiritual uniformity. "It is fit that every people under one prince (or at least of one nation using the same language, civil law and fashions) should be united

in the bands of ecclesiastical polity; for that such a unity apparently is conducive to the peace and welfare both of Church and State; to the furtherance of God's worship and service; to the edification of people in charity and piety; by the encouragement of secular powers, by the concurrent advice and aid of ecclesiastical powers, by many advantages hence arising¹."

3. In the discharge of this duty also, the magistrate must make choice of some particular form of Christianity. It is not within the range of possibility to extend the power of the State to the support of all the religious parties into which the Christian world is divided. Nor, if it were possible, would it be advisable to patronize creeds fundamentally opposed, and sects the most hostile; for that would be to encourage an unceasing war of irreconcilable opinions and conflicting interests. As all religions, moreover, cannot be true, nor all equally good; and as he cannot possibly equally approve of all, if he be a sincere believer in Jesus, he will not only feel inclined, but is in a manner constrained, from a sense of duty, and in obedience to conscience, to give the preference to some one or other. Yet, among the vast variety of sects, and innumerable opinions existing on the subject of religion, which is he to select? and by what

¹ Barrow, on the Unity of the Church.

principles ought he to be directed in making that selection?

It is maintained by many, as Locke, Warburton, Paley, that he is to be guided solely by reasons of state and political expediency. He has no concern, say they, with the truth or falsehood of the doctrines he establishes; his duty being to choose a religion not because of its truth, but because he deems it most conducive to the ends of good government. The writers alluded to, though widely differing in their statement, and partially in their views, coincide in this principle; but no one has treated it with so much method, so much ingenuity, and in so imposing a manner, as Bp. Warburton. His theory is briefly this: The Church and State are supposed to be two societies, the one religious, the other civil; the one extending its care only to the soul, the other only to the body and its concerns, but both sovereign and independent of each other; and consequently an union between them can only be produced by voluntary compact, because what is sovereign and independent can be brought to no act without its own consent. The motives the magistrate had for seeking this alliance, were the temporal advantages which the Church affords; and those which induced the Church to accept it were the security and protection it received from the civil

power. According to this theory, "the true end for which religion is established is not to provide for the true faith, but for civil utility¹."

But this, and all other merely utilitarian views, are, to say the least, imperfect; for, admitting the conclusion established in the preceding chapter, the magistrate's choice of a religion must be in connection with its truth. The word of God, which imposes the obligation, renders it imperative upon him to sanction such a creed, and such a constitution of the Church, as are strictly scriptural. No man ought to act, or be compelled to act, against the convictions of his own conscience; and to attempt *on any account* to support what he is fully persuaded is erroneous, or heretical, is a flagrant violation both of morality and religion. The directions to "search the scriptures," to approve "whatsoever things are true," to "prove all things," to "hold fast that which is good," to retain "the truth as it is in Jesus," extend to all classes and ranks of mankind. No circumstance can justify either individuals or societies in the profession and maintenance of a corrupt creed; and the command to propagate the Gospel necessarily infers the propagation of it in its integrity. If, then, it be the duty of the

¹ Warburton's Alliance, p. 287. See Archbishop Magee's Charge, in 1826; Archdeacon Pott's Charge, Rights of Sovereignty, &c.

civil ruler to support the diffusion of Christian knowledge, it must be equally so to support it in its purest form.

The utilitarian scheme, so far from being opposed, is rather favourable to this conclusion. The mere politician, even a deist, will naturally take religion under his special protection, for the sake of the temporal benefits derivable from it to the State; and, as religious societies will establish themselves in some degree or other, the magistrate having no power to prevent it¹, common prudence requires him to lend the weight of his influence to that which, in his judgment, maintains religion in its purity; "for if TRUTH and PUBLIC UTILITY coincide, the nearer any religion approaches to the truth of things, the fitter that religion is for the service of the State²." The line of conduct which Revelation prescribes to supreme rulers will always correspond with the decisions of sound policy.

With the sovereign, however, who owns subjection to the law of Christ, it will be a sacred obligation to support the true and purest form of Christianity; but how is he to judge of it? On what grounds is he to form his decision? The answer is, that, and that alone, is the true faith, which in all its parts is accordant with the

¹ See ante, chap. ii. sect. 1.

² Alliance, p. 90. See also p. 271, et seq.

inspired writings. If it be further asked, How is he to judge of this accordance? The answer is, precisely in the same way as every individual among the people. The word of God is the grand charter of the Christian faith; and to this unerring standard both prince and people must refer for directions as to their appropriate duties. Both are equally obligated to believe and obey the sacred truths revealed therein; and for obtaining a knowledge of them, the same means are equally incumbent upon both.

It would be diverging too far to enter into an investigation of these means. Diligent study of the Scriptures, accompanied with devout prayer for the illumination of the Spirit; the voice of primitive antiquity; the aids of learning; the teaching of the ministry, and the testimony of the church:—these are all so many helps for obtaining a knowledge of divine truth. The two latter are very important; for he who enters any religious society, ought to apply for information to those who are its appointed guardians and instructors. The magistrate must comply with the common terms of membership; and though, like other members, he enjoys the liberty of private judgment, he owes, in common with them, submission to the authority of the society, and to the instruction of its delegated teachers. His official character does not place him in a different condition: it is incumbent upon him, as upon all others, to con-

sult *all* the prescribed aids for the discovery of the truth.

In this respect, all ranks are upon a level; all are bound to use the prescribed methods of instruction, and to make choice of that religion which approves itself to their understandings: and it is as much the duty of the governor to support the religion he believes to be true, as it is of the governed to profess that to which their judgment assents. The right of judging for oneself in religion belongs to every station: and it would be strange if the highest ranks in society were not entitled to a right which the lowest justly claim. Both may err: infallibility is not in man; and it is freely acknowledged that much harm may arise from an erroneous choice on the part of civil rulers¹; but the primary duty of every human being is, in matters of religion, to follow the dictates of an enlightened conscience; and if the sovereign does this both in his personal profession, and public support of a religion, he so far fulfils the obligations of his Christian duty.

4. The magistrate's choice of a religion, then, must be influenced by his conviction of its truth; it is next to be observed, that it is only a civil protection and encouragement which are within the range of his power. As his office is

¹ The objection to establishments on this ground is obviated, chap. II. § ii. 8.

secular, all the sanctions which he can bestow must be also secular. The ministration of spiritual things belongs to spiritual persons, but "the jurisdiction of the magistrate, as Locke observes, reaches only to civil concerns, and neither can nor ought to be extended to the salvation of souls¹;" and therefore civil privileges can alone be conferred by civil government.

Again, as the law never speaks but to compel, and as the magistrate never interferes but to command, all the measures he proposes for the advancement of religion must be such as he can enforce; consequently, they must be of an outward and visible kind. The provisions of human laws necessarily refer to outward acts, and those which are enacted for the promotion of spiritual objects must be of the same description. Internal piety is beyond the reach of the civil ruler; persuasion is not within his province; he wields only the secular power; and he has no other means at his disposal than such as are of a civil nature, and are confirmed by civil sanctions.

His right is not hereby excluded of legalizing the decrees of the church touching spiritual questions. In supporting a particular religious society, he abridges not its privileges and immunities, among which is the power of managing

¹ Letters on Toleration.

its own internal regulation, in regard to spiritual matters. Its rules and decisions on these points he is bound, like other members, to respect; for this is the condition of membership: and, as protector of such society, it is his duty to sanction obedience to them. His jurisdiction not extending to the salvation of souls, he cannot interfere in making them: that belongs to the church; but, being made, he can assume them, and declare them to be part and parcel of the law of the land; and is justified in endeavouring by the enactments of civil laws, and other exertions of his authority, to render them effectual for the end proposed, provided they in no way infringe upon the rights and liberties of others.

5. Not only is it by external and visible means alone that the state can establish a religion, but these means likewise must be consistent with the inspired records. They may be varied and modified, as we shall see by-and-by, according to the varied circumstances of the age and country; but both in their own nature, and in their application to the support and encouragement of a particular creed, they must be of a strictly scriptural character. The magistrate is not at liberty to employ whichever may suit his humour or fancy; in these, as in all other official measures, he should be guided by the principles of Christianity. The word of God, which prescribes the magistrate's duty,

prescribes rules for its performance. Not only ought the religion he establishes to be scriptural, but the method of establishing it ought also to be scriptural. He can neither lawfully adopt a system, nor support it by means, contrary to the known laws of God. He is prohibited, for instance, from the use of force, or coercive measures in matters of religion; from prescribing any thing cruel, tyrannical, or unjust; for every thing of this kind is condemned by the sacred Scriptures. But without further enumerating particulars, suffice it to observe, that both the religion which he chooses, and the means which he proposes for extending its influence, must be wholly and strictly consistent with the revealed will of God.

6. Though revelation is the pure fountain, whence the chief directions must be drawn for the discharge of the sovereign's duty in this matter, yet he is to be guided in part by the dictates of political expediency. He is the constituted guardian of the civil peace and interests of the community; and in his official character must neither do aught, nor permit any thing to be done, inconsistent with them. Being "the minister of God for good," for secular as well as spiritual good, he must not violate the one on the plea of advancing the other. The act of establishing a national religion is a civil act, and must, of course be in some measure

regulated by civil considerations of what is expedient and advantageous to the community. The privileges with which the church should be distinguished, the rules and provisions by which it should be directed, the revenues by which it should be endowed, the measures by which it may be most effectually protected, are questions which must be mainly determined on the same principles as all other matters affecting the peace, and interests, and constitution of the state.

The various circumstances relating to the external condition of Christianity ought, in justice and prudence, to be modified according to the diversities of every age and country. To lay down one universal, unvarying method of procedure is as arrogant presumption as to boast of a never-failing remedy to cure all diseases. There must be an accommodation to the continually changing scenes of the world. Measures, to be effective, must be adapted to the ever changing course of human affairs; and this adaptation opens an expanded field for the exercise of sagacity and prudence. Such being the constitution of the natural and moral world, governors, in the discharge of their arduous duty as protectors of the church, must take care not to violate the duty which attaches to them as guardians of the temporal welfare of society, but in all their proceedings therein to act in a

manner consistent with the true end and design of civil government—the maintenance of the interests of the state.

To this position the more sure word of inspiration hath borne its attestation. Much of what in the New Testament relates to the government of the Church, and to ecclesiastical constitutions, is deduced from general principles, incidental precepts, and apostolical practice. The Scriptures, then, have left many things intimately connected with this subject to the decision of human reason. God never operates in vain; he vouchsafes not a particular revelation for the purpose of teaching that which may be otherwise known, nor delivers express directions upon matters where the understanding alone is competent to decide. Revelation is only given where revelation is needed; as it certainly is not where the end and means fall within the grasp of the human intellect, and where human sagacity and prudence are adequate guides under the direction of the light of Christianity. The fact, however, of many things appertaining to the propagation of divine truth being left to the judgment and discretion of believers, clearly manifests it to be the will of God, that civil rulers, in all their measures on account of religion, should act with prudence and discretion, which they would fail to do, if they did not at the same time con-

sult the civil interests which it is their duty to protect.

The same is implied in many Scriptural declarations: "Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right," Luke xii. 57; "I would have you wise unto that which is good," Rom. xvi. 19; "I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say," 1 Cor. x. 15; "See that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise," Ephes. v. 15. Is it possible for a magistrate to comply with these and similar directions, who, even for the sake of religion, acts without a due regard to those civil interests which it is his office to preserve? The injunction to be prudent and circumspect in all things attaches as strongly to the prince as to the people; only in the discharge of the highest functions of the State, extending to many interests, often clashing, and involving matters of deep responsibility, more than ordinary deliberation is requisite. The chief magistrate cannot always carry into effect what he conceives to be the best designs; but in pursuing the highest and holiest purposes is bounded by the limitation of his power, and the circumstances of the country, and is often glad to adopt what is practicable rather than what is most desirable. An attempt to promote religion without the guidance of prudential considerations will generally prove abortive, and not unfrequently injure the sacred cause it was intended

to serve. Views of civil utility, therefore, and reasons of sound policy, must never be lost sight of by any government anxious to accomplish the great ends for which it was designed.

The higher and conscientious convictions, indeed, should never be compromised for mere reasons of expediency; yet in all his official acts the sovereign must have a regard to both, or he betrays his trust. He is bound by his faith as a Christian to establish a religion, of the truth of which he entertains an honest conviction; but in doing so he is equally bound by his duty as an earthly potentate to look to those secular considerations, which relate to the political good of the state. He sustains a two-fold character, the Christian and the magisterial; and, as such, ought to be influenced by motives partly religious, and partly political; motives which, so far from being opposed, coalesce and harmonize in the most friendly manner; are founded on the same sacred obligations, operate by the same means, and terminate in the same results. In reference to this subject much fine reasoning may be found in the utilitarian writers; but it is unnecessary to enlarge upon particular points; the general conclusion being completely made out, that it is as much the sovereign's duty to consult the civil good of the community, as to patronize religion; and therefore that all the means which he devises for the latter object

must not only be consistent with the Scriptures but also with the prudent exercise of the civil privileges with which he is invested.

7. In this conclusion we are furnished with an easy solution to a problem involved in some intricacy, namely, what is the proper line of conduct to be pursued by the sovereign, when either the religion of the people differs from his own, or when they themselves are nearly equally divided in religious opinion. If our conclusions are well founded, it is clearly his duty to support that religion which recommends itself to his reason and conscience, but only so far as he can consistently with the principles of Christianity, and with the duty he owes to the State as conservator of its civil peace. Such is the general rule, subject to those modifications which may be necessary from a prudent consideration of each particular case. To attempt *to force* it against the convictions of his subjects, or when it would shock the feelings of the majority, and to endeavour to attain the object by violence and coercion, would be a tyrannical bigotry in the highest degree culpable. In this, as in every other question respecting his conduct as a Christian ruler, his decision ought to be influenced by a sound and sober discretion, enlightened and guided by the Word of God, taking the strictest care never to compromise principle to expediency, nor to abandon the dictates of a

well-instructed conscience for the sake of any object of temporary advantage and worldly interest.

8. The same rule points out the course to be adopted when some change or reformation becomes advisable in existing institutions. The magistrate has the same right to alter, amend, or repeal an establishment, that he had to enact it; and he may be as imperiously called upon to do the one as the other. But his Christian obligations are subject to no change; he must be actuated by the same motives, and directed by the same principles in the one case as in the other. If any doubt arise in his mind concerning the truth of the religion established, the orthodoxy of some of its doctrines, the propriety of some of its ordinances, the application of its revenues, and the like; or if for any other cause, arising from his own scruples, or those of others, some alteration should be deemed expedient for the good of religion and of the community, he must proceed to effect it exactly in the same way as in the first establishment of a national faith. He must first endeavour by a serious and deliberate use of the best means of information to ascertain whether the proposed change be consentaneous with the sacred Scriptures, in which he enjoys the same freedom of inquiry and liberty of conscience as other persons, and the same right to be determined by his own convictions. Having on this ground decided in favour

of it, he must essay to carry his design into execution in such a mode, and by such means, as are accordant with the tenor of Holy Writ, with sound policy, with a prudent exercise of his prerogatives, and with the indulgence of a full toleration.

9. Such are the principles by which the magistrate ought to be guided in the choice and establishment of a religion. As he can only make use of civil means, which operate either by way of reward or punishment, we must now inquire, what are the civil privileges which he may grant, and the civil penalties which he may annex, agreeably to these principles.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CIVIL PRIVILEGES WHICH THE MAGISTRATE MAY GRANT
FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A RELIGION.

1. THE only means by which the magistrate can support religion, have been shown to be entirely of a civil nature, consisting either of civil privileges or civil penalties. These he is bound to employ, and that, too, to the utmost possible extent, consistently with the principles adduced. This position inevitably results from our former conclusions; nor can any danger, either civil or religious, arise from it, since the same principles which establish it interpose an effectual check against any intrenchment upon the rights of conscience, or upon the natural liberty of the subject. As all civil institutions must in some degree be varied according to the exigencies of the times, and the peculiarities of each particular case, a minute specification of the privileges and penalties adverted to, if it were possible, is unnecessary; inasmuch as the only inquiry now is, what those general ones are which, by the principles laid down in the preceding chapter,

are indispensably required in every well-ordered establishment.

2. **SECURITY.** Among the privileges, this is of the first importance ; for the establishment of a particular religion implies a determination to protect it against the attempts of those who may design to overthrow it. It is incumbent, therefore, upon the government, to pass such enactments, and to devise such measures, as will be sufficient for this purpose. The justice due to all requires the protection of all in their legal rights ; in matters of favour, however, the magistrate has the same liberty to act according to his discretion that every other man claims ; but the grant of certain privileges, considered as the best means of promoting religion, would be useless, unless he secured the use of them to its professors. These privileges also are to be ascertained by law : and consequently become a matter of municipal law, to which obedience is due, subject to no other reservations than such as, under the same circumstances, limit obedience to other civil laws.

It is further implied by a state of security that the church be protected in the enjoyment of its spiritual rights and powers. It does not forfeit its independence in being favoured by the magistrate ; his adhesion to it is upon the common terms of membership—obedience to its decisions, and submission to the instruction of its appointed teachers and rulers : and consequently

in establishing it he virtually undertakes to protect all the spiritual privileges which it can *justly* claim, that is, without invading the privileges of other societies. In this is included security to its ministers in the performance of sacred rites, to its governors in the enforcement of its discipline, and to the people in the unrestricted use of its public and private ordinances. It includes, in short, every thing necessary to the church, for the undisturbed exercise of all the offices and functions which belong to it as a spiritual society.

3. MINISTERIAL QUALIFICATION. Care is to be taken to encourage plans by which those who are intended to be the guides and teachers of religion may be suitably educated for an office of so great responsibility. An establishment to be effective, and this is the design of every establishment, must have a learned and active ministry, for the formation of which a literary and liberal education is indispensable; the supply, therefore, of adequate means for accomplishing this object is one of the highest and most beneficial privileges that can be conferred upon a church. Hence it follows that the government is obligated to provide, in order to furnish suitable instruction, colleges and seminaries of sound learning; and where these already exist, through the munificence of others, to guard, to preserve, to cherish them with the greatest anxiety. So essential are they to the well-being and effi-

ciency of religious institutions, that they may be considered as an integral part of them, and so to be protected with the same unwearied vigilance, and patronized with the same liberality as the institutions themselves. To admit any change which may lessen their value as *religious seminaries*, is to desecrate objects of pious institution, to rob them of their utility as nurseries of piety, and if not designedly, at least practically, to contravene the very ends of an ecclesiastical establishment.

4. MINISTERIAL APPOINTMENT. It is the duty of government to see that persons properly qualified be appointed to teach and instruct the people in the truths of religion, to officiate in its ordinances. For this purpose, some mode must be devised for stationing fit and able ministers, in sufficient numbers, and at convenient distances, over the whole face of the country. This is purely a matter of municipal regulation, quite essential, indeed, to the efficiency of an establishment, but subject to the control of the civil power. The appointment of ministers to particular districts, as it in no way interferes with their qualifications, nor with the discharge of their spiritual functions, is no infringement of the spiritual independence of the church: and the supreme governor may make choice of whatever plan he may judge best for the cause of sound religion. He may retain the right of appointment himself, or delegate it to univer-

sities, to corporations, to bishops, to individuals; he may permit it to be exercised by popular election, or by private persons, on certain conditions; and he may apply any restriction, or any modification, in harmony with the principles which have been before developed.

Religious instruction, it will be allowed, ought to be given to the people in the highest degree, and to the greatest practicable extent. This is one great end of ecclesiastical institutions; which the sovereign patronizes, because he is bound to consult the good of all his subjects, and to exercise his utmost authority, as far as he prudently can, for the advancement of true religion. But to this end the appointment of ministers throughout the land is essential; for which reason, as Paley observes, "the division of the country into districts, and the stationing in each district a teacher of religion, forms the substantial part of every church establishment¹." The sovereign, then, ought to apply his most anxious attention to secure this universal pastoral care and superintendence, as the only efficient means of providing religious instruction for all his subjects, from the highest to the very poorest, from the capital to the remotest corner of his dominions. The whole population must be brought under the cognizance of spiritual pastors and teachers, so that no one, even in

¹ Mor. & Pol. Philos. lib. 6. cap. 10.

the most secluded corner of the realm, can say that there are none to "watch for the soul as they that must give account;" and this includes the necessity of appointing them to distinct and limited localities, over which they may respectively exercise a spiritual superintendence.

It is not now the question which method of appointment is most desirable, nor whether a mixture of several may not be best, as in our own country, which presents examples of almost every mode of nomination. Our purpose is sufficiently answered by showing that church patronage may properly be made the subject of legislative interference; nay, that it *must* be so made in every civil establishment of religion. The very idea of an establishment includes the location of ministers sufficiently numerous, as well as sufficiently qualified, for the offices to be performed by them; for this the magistrate in establishing religion is called upon to provide, and it becomes his duty to sanction such a method of appointment—in other words, of church patronage, as is consistent with the sacred Scriptures, and the political condition of the kingdom.

5. ENDOWMENT.—The external maintenance of Christianity involves the necessity of a suitable provision. Adequate funds must in some way or other be raised for the erection and repair of churches, for the support of a Gospel ministry, and for the performance of religious

ordinances. Whatever rhetoric may be lavished against the use of worldly and carnal weapons in the spiritual warfare, it is in vain to attempt the diffusion of Christian knowledge without *money*. Even the Quakers levy contributions for building meeting-houses, which is a practical acknowledgment of the principle.

Ample confirmation, as might be expected, is supplied by the sacred Scriptures: "Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase; so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine;" Prov. iii. 9, 10. "The labourer is worthy of his hire," Luke x. 7.; comp. Matt. x. 10. "Let him that is taught in the word, communicate to him that teacheth in all good things," i. e. impart to the teacher a portion of all good things, not only wealth, but respect and obedience; and "be not deceived" with the delusive hope that you may refuse compliance. "God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," Gal. vi. 6, 7. You cannot deceive God, who will render to you according to your deeds. "Let the elders (presbyters) who rule well, be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine," 1 Tim. v. 17., i. e. let them have a liberal stipend, an honourable maintenance. "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel," 1 Cor. ix. 14.; should

be supported on account of their preaching the Gospel. This is the conclusion from the reasoning in the preceding verses, which may be regarded as the sacred charter of the right of the ministry to a suitable provision.

The Apostolical assertion of this right, implies a just claim not only to a mere sustenance, but to whatever is requisite for the due fulfilment of their office. It is the people's duty to take care that their pastors may possess an income sufficient for procuring what is needed for themselves and their families; for the maintaining of charity and hospitality, and for living in a manner suitable to men of education and respectability. It is founded in reasons of equity, and in the law of revelation, that every requisite for the ministrations of religion should be furnished by the people, and that those who devote themselves to the ministerial office should have a comfortable provision.

This is the general principle; but the question arises, whether they are to be maintained by *legal revenues*, or by *voluntary contributions*. Yet the moment we enter upon this, we find ourselves involved in obscurity. The voluntary system has of late been trumpeted forth in every variety of publication—daily, weekly, and monthly—in popular meetings, with the noise of rude clamour—in every mode calculated to give it publicity, and to captivate the unwary: but the phrase itself hardly conveys a distinct

and definite idea. In one sense the Church of England rests upon the voluntary principle, since nearly all her endowments were at first the spontaneous gifts of the owners of the soil, or of other wealthy individuals. The building and endowment of a church by a nobleman, an opulent commoner, or by subscription, is a purely voluntary act. The question, therefore, has no reference to the *origin* of ecclesiastical funds.

If we look at their *continuance*, the uncertainty in no degree diminishes. That which was at its commencement a spontaneous offering, cannot lose that character by length of time. He who, in aid of a particular object, gives a thousand pounds to be paid by equal annual instalments for the next hundred years, is as much a voluntary contributor, as if he gave the whole to be expended at once. In many charitable institutions it is made optional by the rules, either to contribute a larger sum at once, or a smaller annually, in order to acquire the privilege of being a trustee, of giving recommendations, and the like. In the same way a church may be endowed by a sum, the interest of which is to be paid annually for ever; and yet it is quite a voluntary arrangement.

Even the endowment of a national Church by those who hold the supreme and legislative power in the State, is as much a voluntary act on their part, as the contributions of private persons. And of these last, a minute fraction

only can be truly said to be voluntary; the chief part is in fact compulsory; not, indeed, by law, but by the irresistible impulse of opinion. Much of what is contributed to public institutions springs from the dread of disgrace, of losing cast in society; and of that which is raised for religious objects, it is no small share which is given through the fear of incurring the reproach of the association, and the resentment of its teachers, or of being subjected to the vengeance of spiritual thunders. The inquisitorial power of auricular confession, of class-meetings, of Church societies, has as great an influence over the conduct of many as any legislative act. The mite bestowed by the Dissenting mechanic, or by the starving peasant in an Irish hovel, is perhaps for the most part extorted by the compulsory force of opinion; and that, too, the more dangerous by not being defined and limited by law, but left to be determined by the fluctuating emotions of zeal without knowledge, or by the boundless avidity of spiritual despotism¹.

The voluntary principle, in short, is either a phrase caught up and bandied about without conveying any clear idea; or, when examined in all its bearings, but little differing from the system to which it is opposed. The actual spontaneity of the gift is as much destroyed when it is extorted in obedience to opinion, as

¹ See O'Croly's Pamphlet on Ecclesiastical Finance.

when it is compelled by law. Hence to exclude all payments which are in fact compulsory, would exclude from the operation of the voluntary system, not only the parish Church, but all those Dissenting chapels to which certain funds are legally appropriated. "In truth no modern religious community adheres to any such rule; but, on the contrary, the parties most vehement in their advocacy of the voluntary principle, themselves carefully retain whatever corporate property may have fallen into their hands; and while they inveigh against endowments, must be understood to mean any endowments but their own¹."

All Church revenues, then, may be said to be compulsory, though not in the same degree, nor in the same mode; some being raised by the force of opinion, and others by the power of law. In this alone lies the difference; and surely it is against common sense to make such a subtile and doubtful distinction the basis of a sectarian dispute. Yet upon this distinction rests the only clearly-defined and intelligible statement of the point at issue; namely, whether religion and its ministers should be supported by *stipends legally fixed and permanent*, or by what are called *voluntary contributions from the hearers*.

In favour of this latter system it is argued, that the Scriptures seem to point to voluntary

¹ Spiritual Despotism, p. 138.

contributions of the people as the only method of supporting the Church ; and appeal is made to the texts already cited, p. 117, from which it is argued that voluntary contribution belongs to the fellowship of the Gospel, like other appointed ordinances. But these passages merely enjoin the duty of affording a suitable provision to the ministers of the Gospel, without prescribing the *mode* ; believers being left at liberty to do it either by a private or public arrangement. If from them we are to infer that the voluntary system is an express institution of Christ, it must be of universal obligation ; yet St. Paul in some cases declined receiving any thing for his support, choosing rather to work with his own hands ; which, we may be assured, he would not have done, had he considered this system imperative upon Christians ; for he would have been preventing them from performing a commanded duty. Necessity alone could justify him in hindering them from complying with a Christian institution ; but he declares that he did it for reasons of mere expediency and prudence, lest he “should hinder the Gospel of Christ,” “that he might cut off occasion from them which desire occasion ; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we ;” “not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an example unto you to follow us ;” *i. e.* an example of industry and disinterestedness, 1 Cor. ix. 12 ; 2 Cor. xi. 12 ; 2 Thess. iii. 8, 9 ; comp. Acts

xx. 33, 34; 1 Cor. iv. 12; 1 Thess. ii. 6—10. St. Paul, therefore, as is evident from these texts, claimed the right of maintenance for the ministry, and only waved it from prudential considerations; but in what manner, or by what arrangement this maintenance is to be supplied, is left to the determination of human judgment and discretion¹.

The Voluntary system is also supposed to be enjoined by our Saviour's words, "Freely ye have received, freely give," Matt. x. 8. But they cannot mean that ministers should preach without reward, for in the very same discourse he declares, "The workman is worthy of his meat," v. 10; comp. Luke x. 7. They seem to refer to the miraculous powers delegated to the apostles, whom Christ enjoins to dispense them as freely as they were bestowed. The charge, at least, was personal to the apostles; or, if it can at all apply to uninspired ministers of the Word, it must be understood, not as prohibiting them from taking a reward for their labour, but as forbidding them to be covetous, anxious after profit, and solicitous to hoard up riches; and so parallel to the apostle's precept to "feed the flock of God, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind," 1 Pet. v. 2. To interpret

¹ See Benson on the texts referred to, and History of First Planting of Christianity, lib. 2. c. 5. § 8.

it in the strict sense would exclude a voluntary as much as a legal and permanent provision.

So much for the objections. On the other hand, it clearly follows from the principles already established, that it is incumbent upon the governors and legislators in Christian countries to provide the requisite funds for religious instruction and religious services. If it be the duty of the magistrate to maintain religion by every lawful and practicable method, then is he bound to furnish, as far as he can lawfully and prudently, the pecuniary means necessary for that purpose. As they cannot be adequately supplied from his own private resources, he is bound to provide such as are within the reach of his official power ; by encouraging, for instance, voluntary contributions ; by securing through legal enactments the endowments and revenues which the wealthy are willing to grant ; by an equal taxation of all classes, or by whatever system may be judged most expedient, enforced by equitable and compulsory laws. Granting the premises, the conclusion is inevitable ; for a command to do a thing includes the means necessary for its performance.

In various matters connected with religion the Scriptures, as observed in the preceding pages, leave room for the exercise of a sound discretion ; and pecuniary arrangements are assuredly of that sort. They come fairly within the province of human reason, the legitimate exercise of

which is not superseded by Revelation. No matter of ecclesiastical institution requires to be so nicely adjusted to the habits, localities, and internal state of each nation; an adjustment which demands the application of good sense and political prudence. Pecuniary arrangements, then, cannot be everywhere one and the same; for a system highly beneficial in one age or country, may be quite the reverse in another. Some, however, must be adopted, since supplies are indispensable to external Christianity; and as it is the magistrate's duty to support religion, it falls within his province to choose and legalize that which is best fitted for the end proposed.

In European states a considerable property has been devoted to the maintenance of religious offices by the spontaneous piety of the earlier ages. In such cases the magistrate is not called upon to levy fresh contributions, not at least to any great extent, but to secure the old. If it be binding upon him to supply, as far as possible, the pecuniary sources when wanting, he must be under the most sacred obligation, when they are already provided, to preserve them entire and undiminished. To seize upon them, or to divert them to the use of the state, or to any other than that for which they were intended by the donors, is a flagrant breach of trust, an act of the grossest injustice, a daring and public spoliation; nay more, it is a robbery of things consecrated to the service of God, which con-

stitutes a kind of sacrilege, of which those in office who call themselves Christians should tremble to be guilty. "Either the name of Godhead," says Hooker, "is but a feigned thing, or, if in heaven there be a God, the sacrilegious intention of Church robbers, which lurketh under this plausible name of reformation, is in his sight a thousand times more hateful than the plain professed malice of those very miscreants who threw their vomit in the open face of our blessed Saviour¹."

6. But against compulsory payments for the support of religious offices it is urged, that it is *unjust* to compel Dissenters to contribute towards the expense of ministrations by which they do not profit; and *a violation of the rights of conscience* to tax them for the support of a Church of which they do not approve. To these two points all the loud descants about the onerous burden, the intolerable grievance, the loathed oppression of ecclesiastical taxation may be reduced; but when stript of the gaudy colours so variegated and so richly spread by nonconformist pencilling, they will be found light and unsubstantial.

The first ground of objection, the injustice, is based upon the assumption, that those who separate from an Established Church are in no way profited by it, which is undoubtedly contrary to

¹ Eccles. Polity, l. 7. § 21.

fact. Religion, it will not be denied, is a great blessing; and so far as the public maintenance of it tends to the peace, the good order, and the welfare of society, Dissenters have a share of the advantage. Allowing even the benefits of an establishment to be of a kind merely temporal, they are nevertheless a public good, in which every member of the community more or less participates. As it is not the design of this work to press arguments of utility, it may be sufficient to refer to Dr. Dealtry, who, in his Charge in 1834, has most ably shown that the benefits of an establishment are not confined exclusively to the members of its own communion.

But, say our opponents: "Admit that Dissenters should be compelled to share in its support because they share in its advantages, we affirm that the operation of dissent is at least equally beneficial to society at large; that the members of the Establishment participate in the good effects resulting from its influence; and that they should, on this principle, be compelled also to contribute to the maintenance of dissenting teachers¹." Some injudicious advocates may have reasoned that, as all participate in the benefits resulting from an Establishment, all should be compelled to contribute to its support; but this is a misapprehension of the

¹ Conder, on Nonconformity, vol. ii. p. 552.

argument, the real scope of which is, not that Dissenters should be compelled to contribute to an Establishment because they derive profit from it, but that they have no right to complain of *injustice* on the ground of deriving no profit from it; inasmuch as the allegation is unfounded in fact. Admitting that they participate in the benefits, to whatever extent, the ground of the alleged injustice is subverted, and the objection vanishes into air. If the operation of dissent were proved to be in some degree beneficial to society at large, Churchmen could not reasonably object to contribute to its maintenance on the ground of reaping no profit from it, though they would object on other grounds; for, without denying it some good effects, they would believe them far out-balanced by the necessarily attendant evils.

Supposing Dissenters do not in any way profit from an Established Church, it by no means follows, that the supreme magistrate is to be debarred on that account from applying a part of the national revenue to what he conceives the most useful and important of national objects. The public expenditure flows, and must flow, in various channels from which the bulk of the people derive no immediate advantage, and which are not unfrequently absolutely prejudicial to some individuals; yet the government is not chargeable with injustice. From the army, the navy, the customs, the excise;

from a harbour, a breakwater, a canal, a bridge, and a thousand other things, this or that person may reap no direct profit; but it would be absurdity itself to assert that they cannot be justly called upon to contribute to the expense. The objection, then, leads to consequences which common sense rejects; it also asserts a principle that no one is to be taxed for any thing not beneficial to himself *individually*, and that of this he is himself to be the *judge*; a principle which, if admitted, would render the administration of the State impracticable; since any one might refuse to pay his quota of the taxes on the plea that they were expended on that from which he derived no profit; a plea which, on the ground of the objection, it would not be easy to invalidate.

Civil government, as the ordinance of God, must enjoy the right to whatever is necessary to its effective and beneficial administration; and, as without revenues its affairs cannot be carried on, it must be right to levy them by an equal but compulsory taxation. Hence, the duty of subjects to "render tribute to whom tribute is due;" and the reciprocal duty of the ruler is to expend the public money in the way most conducive to the public interest. What pecuniary arrangements may be so it belongs to his office to judge; and, as they are of a civil or temporal nature, they may be enjoined by

him, and when so enjoined they become really valid laws, to which each member of the State is conscientiously obliged to submit. They can be exonerated from this obligation only by such conduct as will exonerate them from the duty of all obedience.

The other plea of a violation of the rights of conscience is fraught with consequences equally dangerous. If Dissenters are to be exempted from contributing to an Establishment because they in some respects disapprove of it, every one by the same rule must be exempted from contributing to any measure of government of which he disapproves; a rule obviously incompatible with the very existence of government. Nor does it appear how the payment of a church-rate, for instance, can be a persecution and violation of conscience, though we may not altogether like the Church or its services. The duty of submission to "the powers that be," is enjoined in the scriptures; and a payment of an impost to them is surely justifiable on that ground, though we may deem some of their proceedings unwise, impolitic, or unjust. St. Paul enjoins the converts to pay taxes to the Roman government, part of which were expended in maintaining a superstitious and idolatrous worship. The payment, moreover, is not optional but compulsory; and it is difficult to conceive how any one can really feel scruple

of conscience in doing that which they are compelled to do by the laws and constitution under which they live.

It is attempted by some to parry the force of these remarks by making a distinction in the right of taxation between things secular and things sacred; in the former, say they, the civil power may compel the submission of the people, though the conscience may disapprove of them, but not in the latter. This, however, rests upon an assumption which is a mere begging of the question; for the whole dispute hinges upon the right of governments so to interfere in matters of religion as to lend the power of the State to its support, which implies the right to levy the requisite funds from the people. The affirmative, it is presumed, has been substantiated; and besides, it has just been shewn that an ecclesiastical tax, as such, is neither unjust nor a violation of conscience. It may be impolitic, it may be unwise to impose it, but it does no injury to conscience; and, in the payment of it, no other scruple can rationally be entertained than the reluctance which every man feels to contribute to that which he dislikes.

Neither part, therefore, of the objection is of any validity against the conclusion above deduced, namely, that it is incumbent upon governors and legislators in Christian States to provide the requisite funds for religious instruction, and religious services. If it be the right

and duty of the magistrate to support a national religion, it must be equally his right and duty to assign a portion of the national revenue for that object. Such is the principle: as to what relates to its amount, to the mode of collection and manner of distribution—these are matters of fiscal regulation; and, like other matters of that sort, are to be settled and enforced by municipal law. In many countries, particularly in our own, this principle is seldom called into operation, except in the article of church-rates; which, from the smallness of the amount, cannot be felt as a burthensome impost. The endowments and possessions of the Anglican church, together with the tithes to which she is entitled, are voluntary grants from the former owners, and cannot justly be regarded as a tax imposed by the government.

CHAPTER V.

THE CIVIL PENALTIES WHICH THE MAGISTRATE MAY IMPOSE IN ESTABLISHING A RELIGION.

1. THE sovereign, as we have seen, may grant certain privileges for the sake of supporting religion; but how far he is justified in enforcing it by civil penalties, is a question of much intricacy: but the principles already laid down will help us to the solution.

2. The magistrate has a right to repress by the arm of secular power all overt and active attempts to overthrow the established religion. Under this designation it is not meant to include fair argument and serious discussion, the right to which necessarily springs from the right of private judgment of free inquiry; nor the use of legal and constitutional means to effect its abolition; for this is a civil right which belongs to every man as a citizen. But every other kind of active opposition, being unjustifiable, may be put down; for the magistrate having

chosen a religion, and incorporated it with his government, by this act virtually undertakes to defend it as belonging to the constitution, which it is his duty to preserve by all legal and constitutional means.

3. Not only overt acts, but the profession or avowal of sentiments decidedly hostile to the safety of the constitution, may be repressed by coercive measures. When any under the pretext of religion assert that it is right to plot against the establishment, and to seek its destruction by every method, constitutional or unconstitutional, it would be an act of self-destruction for any government to tolerate them. An establishment being part of the civil law of the community, the inculcation of resistance or of such doctrines as are detrimental to the public peace, is an offence against the state, which justly calls down the exertion of force for its suppression. No man who has the tranquillity and preservation of the state in view, will deny that they are liable to suitable punishment, whose principles naturally lead to machinations and attempts destructive to the establishment, and rebellious against the civil power.

4. It is right and just to subject to punishment any set of persons who propagate doctrines subversive of the public morals. The magistrate, by the nature and end of his office, is the conservator of the civil interests of the community, which obliges him to restrain by co-

excite laws whatever may endanger or destroy them. Virtue is the bond by which society is held together; opinions, therefore, which sanction vice, subvert the foundation of the social state, and ought to be repressed by the civil power, as directly tending to universal anarchy and confusion. There have been some who build upon the Christian law tenets, which militate against the rights of property, who advocate a community of wives, who hold in derision conjugal fidelity, virgin purity, and other virtues; who believe there is no king but Christ, under whom an universal monarchy is to be established; who broach the principles of a levelling equality. Corrupt practice must flow from corrupt principles; and all persons entertaining sentiments of this description may be with great justice visited with the vengeance of municipal law.

5. Opinions incompatible either with the existence, or the necessary functions of civil government, are justly amenable to civil penalties. Those whose religious sentiments have an undoubted tendency to excite a spirit of resistance to the ruling powers, or to embroil the state in discord and commotion, are justly excluded from the benefit of a free toleration, as being offenders against the laws of society. If there be any, for instance, who disregard the sanctity of an oath; who, without scruple, and even with contumelious boast and effrontery, violate what every man of common sense admits to be its

plain signification, and that which it was intended to convey; is there any one worthy to be called a disciple of Christ, who would not deprecate the admission of such to offices of trust and emolument in the state?—who would not allow that such well merited the severest reprehension of the civil power?

6. In the cases just mentioned, the infliction of certain civil disabilities and restrictions is a just and necessary precaution. Nor is some overt act absolutely necessary to bring them within the judicial cognizance of the magistrate. Between principles and practice there is an indissoluble connexion; so that principles inconsistent with peace and order will naturally lead men to violate peace and order. It is just as well as prudent in governors to exact securities from those who not only propagate, but who entertain sentiments directly tending to anarchy, before society feels the horrors of it in reality. The end and object of their office requires them to repress, and if possible to stifle in embryo, whatever creates a well-founded apprehension of danger to civil peace.

These observations are not to be construed into a denial of the people's right to resist tyrannical and oppressive governments; a right which may be justified by the peculiar emergencies of the case. But no government can admit the justice or lawfulness of resistance to its own administration; and therefore cannot tolerate those religious sentiments, or those which are

approved under the pretext of religion, which either permit, or inculcate, or tend to encourage and produce resistance. "Self-preservation," as Bishop Horsley remarks, "is the leading principle which must govern the whole morality of a state; in so much that no claim on the part of a citizen, or of any description of citizens, temporal or ecclesiastical, can be just and equitable (the government itself being supposed a just one, both in its principles and execution) which may be contrary to the state's security¹."

Nor are penal laws relating to religion enacted on account of religious opinions *per se*, but because, from their connexion with practice, they either do lead, or may naturally be expected to lead, those who honestly hold them into practices against the civil peace, or into resistance against the government. Civil pains and penalties do not belong to religion as a pure, internal principle, but are allowed by reason of its association with the state; and being granted by the secular power for its own sake, must be confined within the limits of their appointment—the preservation and good order of the state. It is not for their folly or heterodoxy that the magistrate visits religious opinions with restrictions; he can only take cognizance of civil offences; those actions and those doctrines

¹ Review of the Case of Protestant Dissenters, in Scholar Armad, vol. i. p. 429. See Paley, l. 6, c. 10.

alone which endanger the civil interests of the community come within his jurisdiction ; and he must not, with a view to support religion, violate natural liberty farther than is required for securing the great ends of government and social order. As no religious opinions, excepting the cases above specified, contravene these ends, he is not justified in enacting compulsory penalties against any other.

7. As the nature of these penalties may be in some degree varied in adaptation to times and circumstances, nothing more appears requisite on this head than one or two general observations. And in the *first* place, *exclusion from office* may often be necessary on account of religious opinions. It has been freely acknowledged—nay, strenuously maintained, that the magistrate ought only to employ means consistent with the word of God and with political expediency ; and it is accordant with both to exclude those whose opinions or practices are of the description above-mentioned from offices and emoluments in the state. Every man may properly reject from his service those persons whose principles are likely to subvert the peace of his family ; and every government may justly expel from admission to office those whose creed and doctrinal tenets indispose them to be faithful, or stir them up to practices dangerous to its own stability, and the welfare of the kingdom. This results from the duty which every govern-

ment owes to its own preservation, and to the good of the people committed to its care; but whether it is to be effected by a test-law, or in some other way, must depend upon the peculiar circumstances of the case.

Secondly: The magistrate may enjoin *silence* upon those whose declared opinions are prejudicial or dangerous to the state. Liberty of conscience, a natural and inviolable right, requires every man to follow its dictates in whatever relates to the worship of his Creator: with interior religion no human power can interfere, without being guilty of cruelty and despotism. "But," as Vattel observes, "in religious affairs a citizen has only a right to be free from compulsion, but can by no means claim that of openly doing what he pleases, without regard to the consequences it may produce on society¹." Though he may enjoy the liberty of private judgment to the fullest extent, and espouse whatever doctrines he may think fit; yet the magistrate may restrain him from publishing or publicly avowing them, whenever such prohibition is necessary for the welfare of society. At the same time he can require nothing by force, except silence; he cannot, without injury to conscience, attempt to compel any to bear a part in public worship, or other external ceremonies, of which they disapprove.

¹ Law of Nations, lib. i. §. 129.

Thirdly: Whatever restrictions and penalties the magistrate may impose on account of religion, they must be such as are strictly in unison with the genius of Christianity. He is not, under the pretence of encouraging religion, to subject the professors of others to unnecessary disabilities; nor ought he to lay upon them needless hardships, or deny them the peaceful enjoyment of their own opinions, and their own modes of worship, so long as they are attended with no harm to the State. Every pin and wheel in the cruel machinery of vindictive persecution is at variance with the mild spirit of the Gospel, which vindicates all the rights of mankind, natural and social, which contribute to the happiness of civilized existence.

8. Hence appears the obligation to grant a full and free toleration. The magisterial authority is always subordinate to the authority of God; and his duty to promote religion is limited to those methods which the Gospel prescribes for the propagation of it; among which compulsion cannot be found. Force cannot alter a man's belief, nor his opinion as to the lawfulness of an action, and is therefore as useless as pernicious. The civil ruler would violate the principles established in the third chapter, if he employed coercion in things appertaining to religion, or in any way infringed the right of private judgment and liberty of conscience. It is indeed beyond human power to prevent men

from freedom of thought; but no human power has a right to attempt it. Religion being a matter between a man's own conscience and his God, every man ought to judge for himself, since he must render an account of himself to God, Rom. xiv. 12. Salvation is a personal concern, which can neither be alienated nor transferred; and every one having this responsibility, it is incumbent upon all to examine and decide for themselves as to what is best calculated to secure it, Luke xii. 57; Rom. xiv. 5; Acts iv. 19, xvii. 11; 1 Cor. x. 15; 1 Thess. v. 21. It is no less the duty of the people than of the prince to profess and obey the religion which they conscientiously believe to be true; and of course they ought to be left in the full enjoyment of this liberty.

It will hardly be pleaded *now* in opposition, that our Saviour "said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled," Luke xiv. 23. The original word rendered "compel" is often used in the sense of moral compulsion; and here means, persuade them by the most urgent intreaties to come in¹. The idea of forcing men to an entertainment is ridiculous, nor could one servant do it. To employ this, therefore, as an argument for using force in religious matters is perfectly absurd. The apos-

¹ See Christian Expositor, *in loc.*

ties themselves disclaimed the employment of any thing like compulsion: "not that we have dominion over your faith," 2 Cor. i. 24; neither did they represent themselves "as being lords over God's heritage," 1 Pet. v. 3. It is well remarked by Mr. Locke, that "the toleration of those who differ from others in matters of religion is so agreeable to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to the genuine reason of mankind, that it seems monstrous for men to be so blind as not to perceive the necessity and advantage of it¹. Compulsion in matters of conscience is on every ground to be discarded by the magistrate, who has fulfilled his Christian obligations when he has provided the means for supporting religion among all his subjects, leaving the success of them to their ordinary operation under the blessing of divine Providence.

9. The only exceptions which either reason or religion admits to a complete toleration are those which have been above referred to; but of this who shall be the judge? To whom does it belong to determine whether such cases actually exist in a particular country? This is a weighty question; and the answer is, that it falls within the province of its government. The supreme authority in every State must of necessity act with discretionary power; for an autho-

¹ Letters on Toleration, p. 9. See Hints on Toleration, Essays 1—3.

rity, beyond which there is no appeal, cannot be called to an account for its acts. That "the people are the source of all power" is a maxim for ever in the mouths of political sciolists and public agitators; a maxim which, in the ordinary acceptation of the terms, can hardly be reconciled with the divine sovereignty; but to the humble believer in Jesus it is enough to be assured, that "the powers that be are ordained of God," and that he has enjoined the duty of rendering to them obedience in all things lawful. It belongs to their trust and office to judge of the tendency of particular religious professions, whether they are of a character so dangerous to the State as to justify them in imposing positive restrictions.

This, it is acknowledged, is an office of great peril and awful responsibility. Civil rulers may be deceived; they may entertain apprehensions without just grounds; they may decide erroneously; but it is a danger which attaches to every other exercise of their authority. A supreme legislative power must exist, and always with the possibility of error and abuse. It might be an object of desire to see all permitted to follow the dictates of conscience in whatever regards religion; leaving it to God alone to defend and prosper the sacred cause of truth; but when religious sentiments are propagated, or even cherished, which are opposed to the well-being of the State, it becomes the duty of civil govern-

ment to erect a strong barrier against their encroachments. It is neither harsh nor intolerant to counteract or suppress by coercive means those principles which are destructive of the dearest interests of social life, and even subversive of the foundations upon which the social edifice is built. Of this the decision must be left to the magistrate's judgment and discretion, who, in granting a toleration, is called upon, as guardian of the public welfare, to limit it with such restrictions as may be necessary to secure the peace, the safety, and the civil good of society.

PART II.

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

CHURCH-UNION.

I. IT has been shewn in the former part of this work, that it is the duty of the chief magistrate to make choice of that form of religion which he believes to be in accordance with the sacred Scriptures, and to support it by such means as are consistent with the same authority, and with the principles of sound policy. He can neither exercise nor confer spiritual functions; he can neither decree nor expound articles of faith; he can neither lawfully alter nor abridge spiritual jurisdiction; all that he is empowered to do by virtue of his civil supremacy is, to invest with such civil privileges as have been described, that system which he believes to be strictly conformable to the Gospel; and the annexation of these privileges

constitutes a national religion, or Established Church. Hence arises the important inquiry, What that system really is? In other words, what is a truly scriptural Church, both in regard to doctrines and outward constitution; for that alone is the religious society, or Church, which he ought to support.

The word "Church" is used by the sacred writers in various senses; sometimes for the whole society of believers in Christ wherever dispersed throughout the world; sometimes for the faithful of a city or province; sometimes for a particular congregation; sometimes for the Church triumphant in heaven; sometimes, perhaps, for the governors of the Church, and for the edifice or place where a congregation assembled. These applications of the term it is quite superfluous to discuss, as the present enquiry relates solely to the nature of a particular and visible Church. What kind of community do the scriptures represent it? What are its discriminating marks and characters¹?

¹ According to the 19th Article, "The visible church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached," &c.; where the word "congregation" is used as equivalent to "society;" for 1st, the Article is not "Of A Church," but "Of THE Church;" *i. e.* it defines not a *particular*, but the *universal* visible Church. 2ndly, the word is used in this extensive sense in the 55th Canon, which enjoins prayers "for Christ's holy catholic Church, that is, for the whole congregation of Christian people dispersed throughout the whole world." The sense of the Article then

As doctrinal questions are designedly omitted in this treatise, the investigation will be confined to its external constitution ; and for this purpose it will be requisite to inquire into the true character of the Church-state, or Church considered as a society, of its government, of its officers, of its authority, and of the outward worship, rites and ordinances which it prescribes. Having collected what the Scriptures teach concerning each of these branches of the subject, we shall be enabled to ascertain the true nature and constitution of a christian Church.

II. 1. In regard to the first branch of inquiry, the Church-state, all the members have a certain union among themselves, as well as with their common Head, and consequently are *a society*. A number of persons united together, whatever may be the bond of union, constitute a society ; and, as Christian believers are not a confused multitude each independent of the other, but are connected by the ties of mutual relationship, the Church in reference to its members is a society. In this light it is represented by the inspired writers, who designate it *a family*, the members of which have some common relation to one another and to its Master, Matt. x. 25 ; Luke xii. 42 ; Eph. ii. 19 ;

is, that the visible Church of Christ is a society formed of the whole aggregate of those faithful men, among whom the pure word of God is preached, &c.

Ephes. iii. 15; Heb. xii. 22; *a house* which is built upon a rock, and in which the Master assigns to every one his proper gifts and his proper office, Matt. xvi. 18; 1 Cor. iii. 9, 10; Eph. ii. 21; 1 Tim. iii. 15; Heb. iii. 5, 6; 1 Pet. ii. 5: *a city*, where the inhabitants enjoy certain rights of citizenship, Gal. iv. 26; Phil. iii. 20; Heb. xii. 22: *a kingdom*, having common laws, and a government administered under a sovereign, Matt. xvi. 19, xxviii. 18, 19; Col. i. 13; 1 Thess. ii. 12. The Church is also denominated *the body of Christ*, Rom. xii. 4, 5; 1 Cor. xii. 12, et seq.; Eph. iv. 4, et seq., v. 30; Col. i. 18; *the spouse of Christ*, Matt. xxii. 2, xxv. 1; Eph. v. 25, 32; Rev. xix. 7; *a flock* under one Shepherd, John x. 16, xxi. 15, 17; Acts xx. 28; Heb. xiii. 20; 1 Pet. ii. 25, v. 2. 4; *the mountain of the Lord*, Isa. ii. 22; Micah iv. 1; *an elect generation, a holy priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people*, 1 Pet. ii. 9. As all these designations imply an association under the bonds of some common relationship, the church must be a regular society.

2. But it differs from all other societies in this, that it is a *spiritual* society; being founded not for secular but spiritual objects, not for securing temporal privileges and rewards, but those which are spiritual and eternal. It extends to both worlds, and is partly on earth and partly in heaven; but though in the world it is not of the world, being wholly distinct from

earthly kingdoms in its authority and laws. The end of civil society is temporal happiness; the end of Christian society is future and eternal happiness. For this reason it is called "an holy priesthood," 1 Pet. ii. 5.: "an holy nation," ver. 9.; and the members of it are called "saints," Rom. i. 7; 1 Cor. i. 2; "the elect," Tit. i. 1; 1 Pet. i. 2, ii. 9: as being chosen to peculiar privileges and blessings, confirmed to them by the covenant of the gospel.

Owing to this distinction between the civil and religious societies, men may be members of the one without being members of the other; and by their admission into the Church they neither forfeit any temporal privileges, nor obtain any exemption from their obligations to the State; only by becoming Christians they become members of a distinct, holy, and spiritual society, and are thereby entitled to new rights, blessings and rewards. Thus their admission into the one does not destroy their relation to the other, nor cancel their rights to the privileges it confers; but, as belonging to two distinct societies they can reap the full advantages of both. Nor, as both are derived from God, though by different ways, can either the duties which they respectively require, or the privileges they respectively bestow, ever thwart each other, since all the ordinances of heaven must conspire in perfect harmony to one great and benevolent end.

3. Hence it is an *outward* and *visible* society; inasmuch as it is composed of persons living in the world, joined in the outward profession of a common faith, and in the use of outward ordinances and administrations. There is, no doubt, an *invisible* Church, by which is meant those believers who are in covenant with God, who are true members of Christ, holding an inward communion with him as the Head, and who, though they have lived at different ages, and are not now all upon earth, are conceived as forming one invisible and mystical body, because they cannot be discerned by men, nor seen by human eyes. But, in reference to external profession, Christians form a visible society; since they are distinguished by an outward observance of the institutions of the gospel, and by the performance of visible external acts. These visible acts and offices are the proof of being Christians, or belonging to the Church of Christ, and of course those who afford this practical proof form an outward and visible society.

As all who make this outward profession of the Gospel are not united to Christ by an inward communion, the visible Church, it is evident, must consist of two descriptions of persons, the sincere and the insincere. It is represented in scripture as a great house in which are vessels of honour and dishonour, 2 Tim. ii. 20, 21.; as a field in which tares are mingled with the

wheat, Matt. xiii. 30.; as a net that gathereth into it good and bad fishes, Matt. xiii. 47.; as a marriage which a king made for his son, and sent his servants out into the highways, who gathered together all as many as they found, and the wedding was furnished with guests, Matt. xxii. 2, et seq. There are in it sheep and goats, wise and foolish virgins, Matt. xxv. 2, 32, 33.; and many are called, but few are chosen, Matt. xx. 16. According to this representation, the visible Church includes all who make outward profession of the faith, and join in Christian communion, though many of them are not true converts, nor living members of Christ's body. And this is a dispensation of stupendous grace, by which the ignorant and the wicked are received into the visible Church, as an asylum for the recovery of spiritual maladies, where by a diligent use of the prescribed remedies, they may acquire spiritual health and life.

4. The Church is *independent* of all human power, being totally distinct, and deriving none of its authority from the kingdoms of this world. It is an institution complete in all its internal regulations, subsisting and exercising its jurisdiction without the aid of secular power. This follows from its being a spiritual society, which, as such, cannot be dependent upon worldly governments; and from its being founded by Christ, who is its only supreme Governor

and Legislator. As a religious corporation, it is not altered in its nature by the magistrate's admission into it, or by his patronage of it. His station gives him no additional powers in it, but is equally with other members subject to the same conditions, and is under the same rules and orders of the society. The Christian Church owes its establishment to a Divine origin, derives its laws from the same source, and aims alone at spiritual and heavenly objects; in every point of view, in short, it is a distinct society, separate from the State, and must in consequence be independent of it in regard to its holy offices, ministry, and spiritual jurisdiction.

5. Lastly, the Christian church is an *universal* society. The kingdom of Christ is co-extensive with mankind; it comprehends all persons, and all nations, who believe on his name. All the heathen are "for his inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for his possession;" "all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall do Him service;" and our Lord commanded the apostles to teach and baptize all nations, and to convert the utmost parts of the earth. Ps. ii. 8, lxxii. 8. 11; Matt. xxviii. 19; Acts i. 8. Nor is this society confined to one age; it is designed to continue to the end of the world; for Christ's kingdom is "an everlasting kingdom," which shall be established "throughout all generations," and shall "never be de-

stroyed." Ps. lxxii. 5; Isa. ix. 7; Luke i. 33; so that all Christians, however dispersed over the whole face of the earth, and in all ages to the end of time, are comprehended in this one society, called the catholic or universal church, because they possess the same faith, are subject to the same Lord and Master, worship the same God, and are joined in a community of the same ordinances and administrations.

III. Such are the marks and characters of the universal church of Christ; but as it cannot possibly be under one and the same governor and teachers, cannot use the same rights and services: it is necessarily divided into various societies, all of which have their respective officers and ministrations, yet, in their combination, constitute the whole body of Christ's catholic church. But how far ought these subdivisions to extend? what are their limits? and what are the properties and characteristics requisite to constitute each ramification a sound branch of the universal church? I mean as to the number and locality of the members; for we are here only concerned with the question of extent; and the real point at issue is, whether a particular visible church ever comprehends more than one congregation, linked together under certain bonds of union, or invariably only one.

The latter is the position of a large section of the Dissenters, who define a church to be "a

number of professing Christians, united to each other by their own voluntary consent; having their proper officers; meeting in one place for the observance of religious ordinances; and who are independent of all other control than the authority of Christ expressed in his word¹." According to this definition, a Christian church is both *congregational* and *independent*, that is, consists of a single congregation, unconnected with any other. If, then, it can be shown that these two characters are never clearly and unequivocally ascribed to a society of Christians, meeting in the same place for religious purposes; or even that the sacred writers apply the term, "church," to denote the Christians of a town, district, or province, consisting of several congregations, the very basis of congregational independency is subverted.

1. In confirmation of their system, the Dissenters appeal to those texts in which mention is made of the *church* at Jerusalem, at Antioch, at Corinth, Acts viii. 1—13; 1 Cor. i. 2; also of the *church* of Laodicea, of Ephesus, of the Thessalonians, Col. iv. 16; 1 Thess. i. 1; 2 Thess. i. 1; Rev. ii. 1. But these texts, it is obvious to remark, by no means prove that the church spoken of in each was a *single* congregation of believers. A similar mode of expression is not unusual with us, when more than one is intended; as we say

¹ James, Christian Fellowship, p. 6.

the church at Rome, at Constantinople, of India, of the Abyssinians. And even allowing that only one is implied, it cannot be inferred from such phraseology that it was *independent*. For any thing that appears to the contrary, each church mentioned in the respective texts *may* have consisted of several congregations united together so as to form only one society or church.

2. The sacred writers, it is asserted, when speaking of the Christians of a whole province never employ the term in the singular number, but with great precision of language speak of the *churches* of Galatia, Syria, Macedonia, Asia, &c. from which it is inferred that a single congregation constitutes a church. But, granting the general use of the plural number in such cases, the inference need not be admitted, and, at any rate, such a manner of speaking supplies not a shadow of evidence as to their *independency*: and except it establishes this, it proves nothing to the purpose. When modern travellers and historians describe "the churches of India," what dreamer would infer that the Christians in our Eastern empire are congregational Independents?

3. A church, it is alleged, is spoken of as coming together in one place; and when affairs were to be determined relating to a church, all the members were called together to give their opinion, Acts ii. 1, et seq., v. 12. 14, vi. 2, 5,

xv. 4, et seq.; 1 Cor. xiv. 23, which would have been impossible if they had not been congregational. Admitting the fact, the utmost that can be drawn from it is, that a number of Christians assembling in one place for divine worship are occasionally styled a "church," a truth in which all are agreed. Besides, when the church is spoken of as coming together, or as deciding upon certain matters, the phraseology itself does not determine whether it was done by the entire body of believers, or by the heads and rulers, or principal persons among them; and therefore leaves undetermined that upon which the stress of the argument lies. It has moreover, no bearing upon the real question in dispute—whether such Christian assembly was *independent*, or formed a section of an aggregate church.

4. Great reliance is placed upon those texts which expressly denominate a single congregation a "church," as Rom. xvi. 5; 1 Cor. xvi. 19; Col. iv. 15; Philem. 2: comp. Acts xiv. 23, 27, xv. 3, 22; 1 Cor. iv. 17, xiv. 23; Phil. iv. 15. It is not denied that the word "church" is sometimes used in a restricted sense for a particular body of Christians, who assembled for worship in the same place; but not one of the texts here referred to proves such congregation to have been *independent*; and therefore proves nothing for the independent scheme. But some of them supply strong

evidence against it, as will be shown in the next section.

5. The Jewish church, it is said, was constituted on the principle of nationality; but this was a state of things which was not destined to continue; for Messiah's reign was to be a period of purification of the church, when "the wicked were to be shaken out of it;" when there were "no longer to enter into it the uncircumcised and the unclean;" when the messenger of the covenant was to be as a refiner and purifier of silver," &c., Isa. lii. 1; Mal. iii. 1, et seq.; from which, and similar predictions, it is argued, that the church was no longer to be national, and that a church upon a different principle was to succeed¹. Unquestionably, the peculiar polity of the Jewish system was to cease, and the gospel dispensation was to be of a purer and more spiritual character; but this does not bear upon the outward constitution of the church, whether it was to be national, or congregationally independent. To adduce these prophetic declarations for such a purpose, is to apply them in a manner quite foreign from their real meaning and intent.

Such are the arguments of the Dissenters; and they decidedly fail in one or other of the two points stated in the introductory remarks to this section—they either do not establish con-

¹ Dr. Wardlaw, Glasg. Vol. Ch., Lect. p. 28, et seq.

gregationalism, or doing that, do not at the same time establish *independency*; and failing in either they afford no support to "the cause." Nothing more is in strictness necessary for deciding the controversy respecting the extent of a Christian Church; but it may moreover be demonstrated that the sacred writers employ the term "church" in a collective sense, denoting the several congregations of a town or province, and that these congregations were not independent.

IV. In commencing the review of the evidence on this point it is to be remarked, that the collective sense of the word "church" implies a certain *dependency* among the congregations. A part cannot be independent of the whole; the parts, whether few or many, must be in some way linked and united so as to form one whole. If therefore the respective congregations of a town or province are ever denominated by the sacred writers "a church," these congregations cannot have been absolutely independent of each other, but must have had some bond of union, for this is involved in the fact of their forming one church. No more is therefore necessarily required than to produce Scriptural authority for the collective sense of the word, which is sufficient to evince that a national church, as such, is not unscriptural.

1. In Acts viii. 1, we read of "the church which was at Jerusalem;" comp. ch. ii. 47, v. 11, xv. 4; yet this church must have consisted

of several congregations; for the number of disciples, when Matthias was numbered with the eleven apostles, was "about an hundred and twenty," i. 15; probably only a part of the whole church, as our Lord appeared to above five thousand brethren at once, 1 Cor. xv. 6. To these were added on the day of Pentecost "about three thousand souls," Acts ii. 41. But it is said, many of these might have come up from other countries to the feast at Jerusalem. Perhaps so; though the remark that they "continued stedfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers—continuing daily with one accord in the temple," v. 42, 46, is strongly opposed to such a supposition. The same objection, however, cannot be made to the next accounts in which we find mention made of "the number of the men being about five thousand," Acts iv. 4¹; and of believers being "added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women," ch. v. 14. After this we read that "the word of God increased, and the number of disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith," ch. vi. 7; and some time afterwards, when St. Paul visited Jerusalem, James and the elders said unto him, "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of

¹ Ἄνδρῶν, mascul. from which many infer that this account does not include the women; ἄνθρωπος being the generic name for both; but this is doubtful.

the Jews there are which believe," ch. xxi. 20; where the Greek is, "how many myriads;" and if we are not bound to understand the expression literally for ten thousand, yet it must denote a very great, though indefinite multitude.

Such being the account of the Church at Jerusalem, it must be evident to common sense that so immense a multitude of believers could not by any possibility assemble in one place for divine worship. And this is not only a matter of inference, but also of positive information, for the inspired historian relates that the disciples continued daily both "in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house," Acts ii. 46; and a little after that the apostles were "daily in the temple, and in every house," ch. v. 42. In the opinion of some, the Greek expression denotes an apartment in the temple, or a particular edifice set apart for religious services; and others explain it *at home, privately*; but, without staying to discuss these interpretations, this much is plainly implied in the phrase, that the numbers were too large to assemble in one place, and that therefore they "divided themselves into lesser bodies, and met for religious purposes, some in one house, and some in another." In so immense a multitude this must have been the case, yet all these separate assemblies or congregations are denominated collectively "the Church at Jerusalem."

2. St. Paul writes to the Colossians, "Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the Church which is in his house. And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the Church of the Laodiceans," ch. iv. 15, 16. Here the "brethren in Laodicea" are expressly distinguished from the "Church" in the house of Nymphas; consequently there were at least two, but probably more, congregations in Laodicea; and yet in v. 16. they are called "the Church of the Laodiceans;" showing plainly that there were certain congregations which formed only parts of *one* church.

3. The same apostle directs his epistle "unto the church of God which is at Corinth," 1 Cor. i. 2; yet that it comprehended more than one congregation is demonstrated from the injunction, "Let your women keep silence *in the churches*," ch. xiv. 34. Whether by "churches" be here meant the edifices, or the assemblies, it is clear there must have been several bodies of the faithful who met for divine worship in separate places, which nevertheless constituted the church which was at Corinth.

4. St. Paul says that he sent back Philemon's slave Onesimus, Philem. 10. et seq.; and, as this latter was a Colossian, his master Philemon must have been an inhabitant of Colosse. The same inference may be drawn from the salutation in ver. 2. to Archippus, who appears from

Col. iv. 17. to have been a minister at Colosse. Now the apostle makes mention of the church in the house of Philemon, ver. 2; yet addresses an epistle to the whole body of "the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse," Col. i. 2; of course there must have been more than one congregation at Colosse; and the church in Philemon's house formed one, which, therefore, could not have been independent, but was a part of "the saints and faithful brethren," an expression of an equivalent meaning with "the church at Colosse."

5. "The Church of Ephesus" is spoken of in Acts xx. 17. and Revel. ii. 1. The word of God grew mightily and prevailed there, Acts xix. 20; and St. Paul "persuaded and turned away much people" from idolatry, v. 26; which is also further apparent from the number and value of the books of curious arts burned by the converted, v. 19; and from the great uproar in the city raised by Demetrius and the craftsmen through fear lest their craft should be set at nought, and the temple of the great goddess Diana despised, v. 27. He tarried some time in that city, "for a great door and effectual was opened to him," 1 Cor. xvi. 8, 9. These circumstances prove that a great multitude had, at the time spoken of, embraced the Christian faith, much too great to have assembled for worship in a private house. The historian also informs us, that there were "elders (presbyters)

of the Church" of Ephesus, Acts xx. 17; and of course several congregations. The apostle besought Timothy to abide at Ephesus to "charge some that they teach no other doctrine," 1 Tim. i. 3; which infers a number of elders, some of whom preached erroneous doctrines, and consequently a number of congregations. The same conclusion results from the apostle's directions to Timothy for the ordination and treatment of elders, ch. v. As the 1 Cor. was written from Ephesus, ch. xvi. 8. the church in the house of Aquila and Priscilla, mentioned ch. xvi. 19. formed one of the Ephesian congregations; several of which, it is plain from what has been stated, must have existed in Ephesus; but they could not have been independent, as they constituted only one church, called in the Revelations "the Church of Ephesus."

6. We read of the Church at Antioch, Acts xiii. 1; xv. 3; at Cesarea, ch. xviii. 22; of the Church of the Thessalonians, 1 Thess. i. 1; 2 Thess. i. 1; of the Philippians, Phil. iv. 15; of Smyrna, of Pergamos, of Thyatira, of Sardis, of Philadelphia, Rev. ii. 12, 18; iii. 1, 7, 14. We certainly have no scriptural proof of the number of congregations in each of these; yet it would be offering violence to common sense to suppose that every one of the nine churches spoken of in the texts referred to consisted of only one congregation. The believers in some, if not in all, these places, must have been so

numerous as to render it utterly impossible for them to have assembled together in one room; but if there were several and separate congregations, they were only portions of a Church, and so not independent.

7. In some of these churches we find a plurality of elders or presbyters; as, for instance, "the elders which were at Jerusalem," Acts xvi. 4; "the elders of the Church" at Ephesus, Acts xx. 17; 1 Tim. v. 17; "them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you," 1 Thess. v. 12; "the bishops and deacons" at Philippi, Phil. i. 1. As it is unreasonable to suppose that several elders were required for a single congregation, we cannot but conclude that in each of these places the believers were divided into different congregations, though denominated collectively "the Church" at such and such a place.

This derives no small confirmation from the fact that whenever the churches of a province are spoken of, it is always in the plural number, as the churches of Judea, the churches of Asia, of Syria and Cilicia, of Galatia, of Macedonia, 1 Thess. ii. 14; 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 19; Acts xv. 41; Gal. i. 2; 2 Cor. viii. 1; but when mention is made of the Christians in a particular city, it is always in the singular number, as the Church at Jerusalem, of Ephesus, of Antioch, &c., see No. 6. How are we to account for this difference in the phraseology? If there had been

many churches in one city, they would surely have been called "the churches" of Ephesus, of Antioch, &c., as is the manner with the sacred writers when speaking of the churches of a province. But the singular number is used without any discrimination as to the difference of these places in extent, or the number of believers in them, which shews that how great soever the number was, they were all but THE Church of that city. Yet the number in many instances must have been too great to assemble in one place, though they are denominated THE Church. And this is further confirmed by what the historian relates that the Apostles ordained elders (presbyters) in every Church, Acts xiv. 23., which as one elder only was required for one congregation, is a strong evidence there were more than one congregation in every body of believers called "the Church" of that city.

8. Episcopacy and Independency being diametrically opposite, if the one be proved to be consentaneous to the sacred scriptures, the other must evidently be the reverse. All those evidences, therefore, which establish the scriptural foundation of the former must be put into the scales in deciding the question before us. And we may be content to rest the decision upon this ground; for it is shewn in a subsequent chapter, that the episcopal form of church-government is built upon the imperishable basis of the word of God. But Episcopacy

necessarily includes the notion of a headship and superintendency invested in one individual over the ministers and ministrations of several churches, and consequently Congregational Independency must be unscriptural.

9. That St. Paul did not sanction Independent Congregationalism is apparent from his conduct and example. He declares that "the care of all the churches" came upon him daily, 2 Cor. xi. 28; from which it is evident he exercised some care and superintendency over those churches; which, of course, could not be independent. It will doubtless be said, that the case of the Apostolic churches was peculiar, such as can never occur again; and it is acknowledged that there might be something in St. Paul's oversight of them altogether extraordinary; but still we may rest assured that he would not sanction any thing wrong by his example, and therefore that an Episcopal oversight and superintendency over several churches is consistent with the genius of Christianity¹.

V. The result of the foregoing discussion is, that the Christian Church is a spiritual and visible society, extending over the whole face

¹ If the reading in Acts ix. 31., "Then had THE CHURCH rest throughout all Judea and Galilee, and Samaria, and WAS EDIFIED," &c. could be admitted, it would be strong to our purpose; but, though supported by very respectable evidence, I have not appealed to it, because Griesbach marks it as inferior to the received text, which has the plural, and Scholz rejects it.

of the earth, and throughout all ages, yet divided into particular societies according to the limits of towns, provinces, and countries. The arguments for Congregational Independency have, upon examination, been found to be destitute of weight, and the basis being thus demolished, the whole superstructure must crumble to the dust. It has been also proved that the believers of a city or province consisting of more congregations than one, are denominated "a Church;" from which we derive a scriptural warrant for municipal, provincial, or national Churches.

The catholic and visible Church of Christ, is distributed into these ramifications, to some one of which it is incumbent upon all the faithful to join themselves. The Church being the appointment of God, is a sufficient declaration of his will that men should associate into it; for he would not have instituted such a society without the design that all should become members of it. But there is no other way to become members of it than by an adherence to some one of its branches. Nor can the rights and privileges of a society be enjoyed by any except those who are the enrolled members of it. The blessings of Christ's kingdom belong only to those who enter into it; "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned," Mark xvi. 16. Communion with a particular Church is requisite for a participation in the spiritual blessings which

flow from communion with the catholic Church, and with Christ its Head; because our relation to the catholic Church is evidenced by our communicating with some of those particular churches, of which the general society is composed. Hence every Christian is under an obligation to join in membership with some particular Church, by which alone he can enjoy a spiritual union with Christ, and be entitled to the manifold privileges of the Gospel.

CHAPTER II.

CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

I. As no society can subsist without some kind of government, the Church, as a society, must of necessity have the same. The Scriptures accordingly distinguish its members into superiors and inferiors, the governors and the governed,—into those who were to “feed” and “rule,” and those who were to “obey,” 1 Cor. xii. 28; Ephes. iv. 11; Heb. xiii. 7, 17, 24; comp. Rom. xii. 8. The like intimation is given by our Lord, when he compares his Church to the household of an absent master, in which some servants are placed in higher offices to “rule” over the rest, and to give them meat in due season, Matt. xxiv. 45., and by the injunction that “all things be done decently and in order,” 1 Cor. xiv. 40; for without government the Church, so far from preserving decency and order, would become a riotous and tumultuous assembly. Every system under which the exercise of authority is dependent upon the consent

of those over whom it extends, must lead to confusion and disorder; but "God is not the author of confusion," and therefore for the sake "of peace," he has sanctioned the government of "all the churches of the saints," by a divine institution, 1 Cor. xiv. 33.

It is certain, then, that the Almighty, who has appointed a visible Church, has also appointed a government in it; yet, be it remembered, in subordination to the one supreme governor, Jesus Christ, whom all who believe in him acknowledge as their Lord, who "died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again;" 2 Cor. v. 15. The Church "which he hath purchased with his blood," Acts xx. 28. is made subject to him; for "God hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the Church," Ephes. i. 22; he is "as a son over his own house, whose house we are," Heb. iii. 6; "and all power is given unto him, both in heaven and in earth," Matt. xxviii. 18; "and he is before all things, and by him all things consist; and he is the head of the body, the Church—that in all things he might have the pre-eminence," Col. i. 17, 18. "He hath the key of David, he openeth and no man shutteth, he shutteth and no man openeth," Rev. iii. 7.

Hence no authority can belong to any member of the Church, except what is derived from

Christ. The Apostles received their commission from him; by virtue of which they ordained others for the work of the ministry; and no man is intitled to assume a spiritual rule over others, unless he is empowered and sent by him in whose name he acts. All spiritual authority in the Church, therefore, must be conferred, either immediately by the Saviour or by delegation from him; and the right as well as the power to govern it must be derived from Him who is the supreme Head of it.

II. 1. Our blessed Lord has declared who the persons are whom he has delegated to this office; for, before his ascension, he invested the Apostles with the power to settle and govern the Church: "Go ye, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world," Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. He conveyed to them a similar power to that which he had received from the Father: "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me," Luke xxii. 29. "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you," John xx. 21; comp. ch. xvii. 17. No grant of authority can be expressed in more full and explicit terms; and it is very observable that no allusion whatever is made to miraculous powers. All the privileges here conveyed may be possessed and exercised by the ministers of

Christ, without any supernatural endowment. The commission is—to preach the Gospel, to proselyte the nations, to admit them into the Christian covenant by baptism, to teach them to observe all its conditions, and thus to order all things requisite for the establishment of Christ's kingdom upon earth. The gift of miracles was bestowed upon the Apostles at a subsequent period, on the memorable day of Pentecost; and however necessary to insure success in laying the foundation of the evangelical religion, and in the first propagation of it throughout the world, it formed no part of their ministerial office, nor was it indissolubly attached to the Apostolate. All the powers granted by their Lord's commission might have been executed, though doubtless at that period very imperfectly, if extraordinary gifts had not been vouchsafed to them.

So clear and indubitable is the distinction between the office of the Apostolate and the miraculous powers which accompanied it. These were bestowed upon a subsequent occasion, agreeably to Christ's promise, Luke xxiv. 49; Acts ii. 1., et seq.; but the power for the execution of their Apostolic office was granted by the commission given them by Christ to erect his visible Church. Invested with this ample authority, for the exercise of which they were afterwards endued with power from on high, they not only preached the Gospel, but arranged and settled the whole government of the Church.

They gave rules and regulations to its members, 1 Cor. vii. 17 ; xi. 34 ; 2 Thess. iii. 4. 10, 12 ; and enforced them with suitable punishments, 1 Cor. iv. 21 ; v. 2, et seq. ; 2 Cor. ii. 2, 6, 9, 10 ; x. 6, 8 ; xiii. 2, 10 ; 2 Thess. iii. 6, 14 ; 1 Tim. i. 20. They instituted Divine worship, directed inferior ministers in the administration of it, retained the exclusive power of ordination, rebuked the teachers of error, expelled the contumacious, and in short exercised a general and supreme control over the whole Church.

This commission cannot be meant to be limited to the Apostles individually, for Christ's promise extends to the end of the world ;—neither can it be meant to apply to all Christians ; for, if they were to be made governors of the Church, there could be no governed. But as some kind of government will be needed while the visible Church shall exist, and as the terms of the commission delegate it to those who are chosen to instruct the people in religion, and to administer the sacraments, this government must be invested in the ministerial order, and continued to them to the end of the world.

2. This conclusion is corroborated by the nature and peculiar character of Christ's kingdom upon earth. The Church, as we have seen, is a spiritual and independent society ; its officers, therefore, must be spiritual persons, independent of the secular power. If laymen have jurisdiction over it ; or if human authority can

legislate as to its spiritual concerns, it would neither be spiritual nor independent. The characteristics by which it is distinguished from all other societies, necessarily require that the rule and administration thereof should be vested in its appropriate and spiritual officers. Without this it would cease to be a Christian Church according to Christ's original institution, by which he gave, not to the body of disciples, but to his Apostles and ministers, a Divine authority to incorporate, to teach, and to settle it. As long as it acts by this charter, it is a Divine society; but whenever it does not, its original commission ceases, and it is no longer a true Church, the mystical body of Christ.

3. A right to govern the Church was conveyed in the grant of the keys, or the power of binding and loosing, Matt. xvi. 19; xviii. 18; John xx. 23. As these texts will hereafter come under our consideration, it need only now be observed, that they clearly imply a jurisdiction over the Church; and as this jurisdiction, both by the grant itself, and by the Divine commission, is limited to the ministers of Christ, it must continue to be limited to those who shall succeed them in the ministerial office.

4. A governing power is absolutely essential to the constant and public exercise of this office; for without it ministers could not authoritatively teach and admonish; they could not authoritatively proclaim the Gospel terms of

salvation; they could not authoritatively admit into the Church, nor expel from it, administer or refuse the sacraments. It is represented to be their duty to "feed the Church of God," Acts xx. 28; John xxi. 15, 16; 1 Pet. v. 1; in which expression is implied some degree of care and superintendency; and in the two latter passages it is accompanied with terms descriptive of overseeing and directing. They are to "take care of the Church of God," 1 Tim. iii. 5; and are represented as "ministers" and "stewards," 1 Cor. iv. 1; Tit. i. 7; 1 Pet. iv. 10. A steward is one who has the direction of his master's family, orders and controls the rest of his fellow-servants; and under this character our Saviour speaks of the Apostles: "who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season," Luke xii. 42; Matt. xxiv. 45; and in the language of Scripture believers are denominated "the household of faith," Gal. vi. 10; and "the household of God," Ephes. ii. 19.

5. The apostles not only exercised an ecclesiastical government themselves, but committed it to other ministers, as Timothy and Titus, who were delegated to ordain, to enforce discipline, and to regulate the affairs of the Church, of which proof will be adduced hereafter; while, on the other hand, we never read of any spiritual powers being intrusted to other than spi-

ritual persons. The Apostles, as chosen of Christ, and acting by inspiration, without doubt governed the body of the faithful as their divine Master commanded them; and, as they sanctioned no other than a ministerial government of the church, it must be considered as a divine institution, and of perpetual obligation.

6. The house of Stephanas had "addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints," in consequence of which the apostle beseeches the Corinthians "that ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us and laboureth," i. e. in the work of the ministry, 1 Cor. xvi. 15, 16. The duty of obedience implies a right to command in those to whom it is due; those, therefore, who addict themselves to the ministry, have the authority to govern. The same is implied in the admonition to elders, not to be "lords over God's heritage," 1 Pet. v. 3; for those must have a legitimate power, who are commanded not to lord it over the flock, not to rule it tyrannically.

7. St. Paul beseeches the brethren "to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you." 1 Thess. v. 12. It may not be justifiable to infer, as some have done, that three orders of ministers *then* existed in the church of Thessalonica; but the expressions "labouring among you," and "admonishing," unquestionably designate the ministers in

it, who are also said to be "over them in the Lord;" that is, who preside over, and govern them by the authority, and agreeably to the will of Christ.

8. In writing to Timothy, the apostle says, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine," 1 Tim. v. 17. Rule and authority are here expressly attributed to some elders at least; and that the elders spoken of were of the ministerial order, and not laymen, as some contend, in order to avoid the consequences deducible from this text, is apparent from several considerations. *First*, the word "elder," *πρεσβύτερος*, is used in eighteen or nineteen other places of the Acts and the Epistles to denote a person having *some* evangelical function, and in none of them can it be proved to mean a lay elder. *Secondly*: it may be shown, on the other hand, that when applied in the evangelical sense, it designates a minister of the Gospel. St. Peter and St. John call themselves elders, 1 Pet. v. 1; 1 and 2 John i. St. James says, "Let him (the sick man) call for the elders of the church: and let them pray over him," &c., ch. v. 14. Those whose office it is to comfort the sick, and to pray over them, are clearly spiritual pastors. The elders summoned by St. Paul to Miletus were unquestionably pastors, Acts xx. 17, et seq.; and when he left

Titus in Crete, to "ordain elders in every city," he explains in the succeeding verses the sense in which he used the term, "for a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God," Tit. i. 5, 7. This is full proof that the term does designate a spiritual pastor. *Thirdly*, it is in the highest degree improbable that two quite distinct offices should be included under the same name, in the same passage, and that too the only one adduced for the lay sense of it. *Fourthly*, the Greek word *πολιτῆρι*, here rendered by the verb *to rule*, is the very same which is elsewhere used by St. Paul, when speaking of the rule and authority exercised by presbyters, 1 Thess. v. 12; 1 Tim. iii. 4; and therefore we may presume that in this place he refers to the same kind of officers. *Fifthly*, that by "double honour" is meant a liberal maintenance there can be little doubt; but the apostle claims it only for those who preach the Gospel, and minister about holy things, 1 Cor. ix. 7., et seq., where he cites the same passage from the Old Testament as he does in this place¹; and therefore by "the elders that rule" in the text before us, he must have meant spiritual persons of some kind or other. *Lastly*, the only officers recognized by St. Paul in the administration of Church affairs at Ephesus and Crete, are Timo-

¹ See p. i. cap. ii. § iii. 20.

thy and Titus, bishops or presbyters, and deacons¹, all of whom have spiritual functions; and hence it cannot be supposed that any other were instituted in the Church, or spoken of in this epistle to his beloved son Timothy.

For these reasons we may safely conclude that the text in question refers to evangelical, not lay elders; and if we might infer from it the existence in the apostolic age of two sorts of elders, those who had authority to preach, and those who had power to rule, it would form a strong argument against a parity of ministers. But it can never be made to appear from the text itself that those who "ruled well," and those who "laboured in the word and doctrine," held essentially distinct offices. This is the point to be proved before it can be brought to support a lay-eldership in the Church; but, though some distinction is intimated in it, for the word "especially" implies a difference, it is not a distinction of office; for any thing that appears to the contrary, the elders who "ruled well" *may* have been empowered also to "labour in the word." If, by a similar phraseology, it should be said, "Let all ministers who preside well over their flocks, be honoured; especially they who are labourious in preaching," it would be illogical to infer a distinction of office between

¹ Deaconesses, if they had any ministerial office, must be considered as of the same order with Deacons.

them. A difference is undoubtedly implied; not, however, in official authority, but in its exercise; all having the power to preside and preach, but some applied more assiduously to the one, and some to the other. So in the text, all might have been spiritual presbyters, but some distinguished themselves by ruling well, and some by labouring diligently in preaching; and the meaning will thus be, Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they among them who labour zealously in preaching the word. This is a plain and unforced sense; but be this as it may, "the elders that ruled well" must have had a spiritual office; and so the text supplies convincing evidence that Christ has committed the government of the Church to its ministers ¹.

9. The Apostle thus commands the Hebrews,—"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves," Heb. xiii. 17; and that obedience is here required, not to temporal, but to spiritual, governors is apparent from the next words, "for they watch for your souls as they that must give account;" comp. v. 7, 24. It is, indeed, pretended that the Greek word used by the Apostle merely signifies *guides*, persons

¹ Scarcely any text has been more staunchly controverted than 1 Tim. v. 17.; and besides the writers mentioned in the Appendix, see the learned remarks of Vitringa, Synag. Vet. lib. 2. cap. 2. and 3.; also Mede, Works, p. 70. et seq., who supposes without any warrant that *civil magistrates* are meant.

who were to *lead* the flock by their instructions and example, without any power to command. It is, however, applied to our Saviour in Matt. ii. 6; to the Apostles, Acts xiv. 12; xv. 22., to civil governors, Acts vii. 10., and frequently in the Septuagint; and must, therefore, signify a person vested with authority¹. But independently of this, the meaning here is determined by the context; for the Hebrews are enjoined to “obey” and “submit;” and, as subjection and authority are correlatives, those pastors to whom they are to be obedient and subject, must be invested with an authority and rule over them.

10. To Timothy and Titus, as will be shown hereafter, was delegated an authority to rebuke with all authority, to appoint ministers, and to set in order whatever was wanting for the regulation of the Church; which proves that the government of it was invested in them, and not in the people.

11. The angels, who are the bishops of Churches in Asia, are censured for not exercising their authority in the correction of abuses, Rev. ii. 1., et seq.; which necessarily implies the possession of a governing power over the whole body of believers.

From these testimonies the conclusion cannot

¹ See Trommius, Biel, and Schleusner, in LXX.; Suicer, Thesaur. in ἡγούμεναι.

be avoided, that the government of the church is vested in the ministry, deriving its commission and authority from Christ. And this conclusion will be further strengthened by a brief review of the arguments of those who contend that the laity have a right to participate in the exercise of church power.

1. A notion has been pertinaciously defended from the time of Calvin downwards, that the apostles instituted a lay-eldership in the church; a notion principally grounded upon 1 Tim. v. 17. which, it is alleged, distinctly points out two kinds of elders, those to whom the care and government of the church is entrusted, and those to whom the office of teaching and administering the sacraments is committed. But admitting some kind of distinction to be plainly implied, we are not advanced a whit nearer any proof for a lay-presbytery, since to both kinds, for any thing that appears to the contrary in the text, a spiritual character *may* have belonged, while it has been shown above by other unexceptionable testimony that laymen could not be intended by "the elders that rule well." If, with some of the older non-conformists, we admit a twofold eldership, yet both of the ministerial order, the admission will be fatal to the presbyterian and independent schemes, which are founded upon a parity, and in reality amounts to what has been aptly denominated episcopacy in disguise.

Appeal has also been made to Rom. xii. 8;

1 Cor. xii. 28; but a mere inspection of the texts will convince the reader that they prove absolutely nothing to the purpose. In short, lay-eldership has no foundation in the Sacred Writings; nor was it known in primitive antiquity; "there was never any clause," says Bishop Hall, "in any father, council, history, that did so much as intimate any such office in the church of God, or the man that wielded it," p. 115.

2. Our Saviour's command to "tell it unto the church," Matt. xviii. 17. it is said, implies that ecclesiastical power resides in the laity; since the word "church" in the Scriptures always signifies *the people*. Supposing it does, the real import of the command is, that the private offences of one man against another are to be brought before the congregation, to be dealt with as shall be judged right by the governing power of that congregation, in whatever persons it may be lodged. It is not uncommon with us to speak of the censures of the church, when reference is made to what was done, not by the lay-members, but by its rulers. The term itself leaves it undetermined whether the governing power resides in the laity or the clergy, while some circumstances, which will be noticed in a subsequent page, especially limit it to the latter¹.

¹ See p. II. ch. iv. § 4.

3. It is urged that the direction to the Corinthians to excommunicate the incestuous person supposes the administration of church-power to be in lay hands. But the inference is plainly contradictory to the fact; for the whole proceeding was by the determination and authority of the apostle, who declares, "For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already; as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan," &c. 1 Cor. v. 3—5. The punishment also was remitted by his direction, 2 Cor. ii. 1—10. The people may have been the instruments of carrying the sentence into effect; but it originated with St. Paul, and was both inflicted and remitted by his sole authority.

In this, and all such cases, the people were doubtless enjoined to concur in the sentence, by separating themselves from the society of scandalous offenders. Excommunication would avail nothing, if the person on whom it was inflicted continued to be cherished, encouraged, and sanctioned by other Christians. It would be quite ineffectual for the purposes intended, unless they joined in an open and public manifestation of their abhorrence of notorious sinners. And this is the import of the apostolical direction to the Corinthians, "Put away from among

yourselves that wicked person," 1 Cor. v. 13; that is, reject him from your friendship and society; do not company with him, as seems clear from the context, "but now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat," &c. v. 11, 12. On this account he describes it as a "punishment which was inflicted of many," 2 Cor. ii. 6; because it was by their refusal to admit him into their society, that the sentence became a real punishment to him.

St. Paul writes to the Galatians, "If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness," ch. vi. 1. It is doubtful whether by "Ye which are spiritual" is meant persons sanctified by the Holy Spirit, or persons endued with extraordinary spiritual gifts; but should it apply to the Christian laity, it is quite gratuitous to suppose any official proceeding, any public act of the church was intended, as it expresses no more than that they should have pity upon those who are surprised into any fault, and to endeavour by all proper methods to bring him back again into the right path. The same view is to be taken of such passages as Rom. xvi. 17; 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15; Ephes. v. 11; 1 Thess. iii. 6—14; 2 John 10, 11. et al.; which are merely directions as to the behaviour to be observed towards scandalous

offenders; and can at most be only understood as requiring an assent to, and concurrence with, ecclesiastical censures; which is altogether distinct from the exercise of church power; nor do such precepts decide where, or in what persons, this power is invested.

4. Church authority, it is argued, belongs at least in part to laymen, because the brethren were joined with the apostles and elders in the council of Jerusalem, Acts xv. 22, 23. Now if in this place we omit the conjunction "and," which Griesbach marks as *perhaps* to be expunged from the text, the decree of the council will run thus, "The apostles, and elders-brethren (*i. e.* Christian elders) send greeting," &c¹. But waiving this, how does it appear that the brethren had any independent voice? Their concurrence is the utmost that can be inferred from the history; for Paul and Barnabas were delegated by the disciples at Antioch to consult not the people, but "the apostles and elders," v. 2; accordingly "the apostles and elders came together for to consider of the matter," v. 6; James as president of the mother church pronounces sentence, which he calls his own decision, v. 19; and the decrees are expressly stated to be "ordained of (by) the apostles and elders," ch. xvi. 4. Add to this that, as we have before shown, the apos-

¹ It is but fair to observe that Dr. Scholz, in his critical edit. of the Greek Testament, retains the received text.

ties were intrusted with ample powers to order and settle every thing relating to the church, and during their lives always exercised this right. It is therefore manifest that the apostles and elders were the principals in the council; and though the laity were present, it was only to witness what was done, or at most to attest their concurrence, without either deliberating, or giving their suffrages, as persons entitled to a voice in the decision.

5. The laity's right to exercise church power is argued from certain instances of supposed popular election of ministers. These will come under consideration in the ensuing chapter; but even admitting the fact, it no more proves that church authority belongs to the people than that civil government does to the people of England, because they elect their representatives in parliament. The right to nominate, and the delegation of powers, are different things. A lay patron may present to a living; but the bishop alone gives authority to perform the divine services; and in many other cases the nomination of a person to posts of authority is from one, and the authority itself conferred by another; so that, if the people in the times of the apostles did choose their own ministers, it by no means follows that they also possessed a right to govern the church.

6. The offices of preaching and baptizing, it

is alleged, were not unfrequently performed by laymen in the first age of Christianity, in proof of which appeal is made to Mark ix. 38, 39; Acts ii. 41; viii. 4. 12; x. 23, et seq.; xi. 19; 1 Cor. xiv. 1, et seq.; Eph. v. 19; Phil. i. 14; Col. iii. 16; 1 Thess. v. 11; Heb. iii. 13; x. 21; 1 Pet. iv. 10; and hence it is concluded that the office of governing the Church must also have been granted by the Apostles to the laity. But some of these texts, as Mark ix. 38; 1 Cor. xiv. 1, et seq., relate to persons endowed with miraculous gifts; others may relate to duly authorised ministers, as Phil. i. 14; 1 Pet. iv. 10; Acts ii. 41; x. 48. The persons, or at least some of them, who are mentioned in Acts viii. 4; xi. 19., may also have received a regular commission to preach; or the meaning may be that they spread the tidings of the gospel where they were dispersed merely by conversation and private conference. The remainder of the texts cited refer either to the conduct of Christians in their public assemblies, or to their duty to admonish and encourage one another by private conversation in the profession and practice of the Gospel; a duty incumbent upon all in proportion to their influence and acquirements. Not one of them affords any thing like proof of the fact which forms the basis of the argument; nor, if they did, would the inference be borne out by it; for laymen might, under certain circum-

stances, be permitted to preach the Gospel, who were not permitted to exercise a governing power in the Church.

So utterly futile and insufficient are the arguments for a lay government in the Church; and our conclusion remains perfectly firm, that Christ the Head, has delegated the sole rule and authority in it to that order of men whom he commissions to preach the gospel and administer the sacraments.

III. As under the Law there were several sorts of men separated for the service of the sanctuary, so under the Gospel those who are appointed to teach and govern the Church our Lord hath set apart to be a distinct order and function of men. They are called from their ordinary occupations and duties, by which act they are separated for the work whereunto they are called, Acts xiii. 2; Rom. i. 1; Gal. i. 15. They are to be continually employed in their office, and to be altogether devoted to the service of their heavenly Master, Acts vi. 4.; xx. 17, et seq.; Rom. xii. 7; 1 Cor. iii. 9; Col. iv. 7; 1 Tim. iv. 15, 16; v. 17. The names which are given to them in the New Testament denote peculiarity and distinctiveness of order. They are called "bishops," "angels of the Churches," "elders," "pastors," "teachers," which were synagogue terms, every one denoting peculiarity of order, and they must have been understood in this sense by the Jews

whom Christ and the Apostles addressed¹. The fact of an appointment to be ministers and stewards of the mysteries of God, is an abundant attestation that they were designed to be men of a distinct order, and peculiar function.

IV. To this separate order of men ecclesiastical government is committed; and though its co-existence with secular governments may seem to form an *imperium in imperio*, it is nevertheless of such a character as, in its legitimate exercise, cannot interfere with the civil supremacy of sovereigns.

That all persons are to be subject to the temporal government under which they live, is the unquestionable doctrine of scripture: "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers," Rom. xiii. 1; "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, and to obey magistrates," Tit. iii. 1: "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors," &c. 1 Pet. ii. 13. In these and similar precepts, no exception is made in favour of spiritual persons. If any one could claim exemption, certainly our Saviour might; yet while he was on earth, he always submitted to the civil power, and paid tribute in token of his obedience to it, Matt. xvii. 27., and the Apostles followed the

¹ This is the observation of Lightfoot, Works, Vol. i. p. 23, folio edition.

same example. By becoming either members or ministers of the Church, men do not cease to be subjects of the State, nor owe less duty to it. The spiritual order confers no civil jurisdiction, claims no immunity from the sword of earthly sovereigns, to whom supreme power over all persons, ecclesiastical as well as civil, within the realm doth appertain; so that it is the duty of all Christians, clerical as well as laical, to yield a willing obedience to its commands in all things not contradictory to the word of God.

The sovereign's interference in matters of religion, is only of a civil nature; and his supremacy extends only over the civil means employed for the support of it¹. This is likewise manifest from the absolute independency of the Church; for, being a society purely spiritual, and entirely independent, both in its origin and continuance, of human power, no human power can lawfully controul its spiritual privileges. To the chief magistrate "the ministering either of God's word or of the sacraments" cannot belong; he cannot determine what is true in religion; nor can he lawfully alter, enlarge, or trample upon, the rights and privileges of the Church, as a divinely organized and spiritual society. His power extends only to its outward condition in the world; whatever things of a

¹ P. I. chap. iii. 4.

civil nature relate to it, these, and these only, come within his jurisdiction. They may be denominated "ecclesiastical" as pertaining to the Church; and, in this sense, the sovereign is, within his realm, over all persons; and in all causes, as well ecclesiastical as temporal, supreme.

It must be acknowledged to be often a difficult matter to define the precise limits of his jurisdiction. Men being the subjects both of an earthly kingdom, and of the kingdom of Christ, it is frequently a nice point to draw the line of distinction between the respective duties. Murder, theft, forgery, assault, trespass, and almost all offences against the moral law, may in some sense be accounted causes spiritual; yet they are clearly amenable to the punishment of the temporal government, upon which devolves the care of preserving the public peace. Whatever it be that plainly affects the civil well-being of the State, is a matter of a civil nature, and becomes for that reason the object of the magistrate's care and concern.

Again, in matters purely spiritual, he must be allowed to have cognizance to a certain extent; for this is correlative with his right to choose and establish a religion. Though he has no right to oppose any article of Christian truth, or to dictate any article to be believed as such, he may both confer civil privileges upon those who in his judgment profess the true

faith, and also suppress such dangerous errors as are manifestly subversive of the public religion, or of the public morals. He has therefore authority to judge in matters of religious opinion, so far as they affect the civil good of the State, which is so far an interference in spiritual matters.

Hence the magistrate being bound to protect the Church which he establishes, may convene councils or convocations, whenever it is needed for the preservation of its peace and good order. He may enforce the decrees passed therein, and the constitutions of ecclesiastical governors, by the civil arm. He may chastise and correct the vicious members of the Church, whether clerical or laic, and thus aid her spiritual censures by the temporal rod. He may go still farther, and command ecclesiastical persons faithfully to discharge their respective offices, and punish them for the neglect or abuse of their spiritual functions; yet only so far as God's word doth allow.

His authority, then, reaches to causes ecclesiastical; and he must of necessity be possessed of it; for, as the supreme power in a state, in whatever hands it be lodged, can have no superior upon earth, he must have jurisdiction over *all* orders and estates, and over *all* causes. At the same time it is only a civil, not a spiritual supremacy. In every exercise of official power in religious matters, or over ecclesiastical per-

sons, it is only a temporal cognizance which he can take; and though as supreme, he may judge and decree in ecclesiastical affairs, yet it must be in a secular, not a spiritual manner; for so far as religion concerns the civil good of the state, and no farther, does his authority extend.

Utterly groundless, therefore, is the loud declamation so frequent with Dissenting writers against the royal supremacy, as if it were an infringement of the sole prerogative of Christ, and an injurious attempt to rob Him of his Headship over the Church. It is so providentially ordered by Him, from whom all government is derived, that a *civil* supremacy is not incompatible with a *spiritual* supremacy. The sovereign, as a Christian and a member of the Church, acknowledges Christ as the only Head of it,—as the supreme Lord and Master to whom he is subject, and whose laws and institutions he is bound to observe. Even in things or causes temporal he owns subjection to the commands of Christ, the head of all principality and power. Nor does the ascription of supreme government in the realm imply a right to perform the offices of all persons who are under it: so that it leaves spiritual duties and offices to be performed by spiritual persons; and the ecclesiastical and civil powers being thus essentially distinct, a pre-eminence in one is no infringement upon the other.

Having thus ascertained that the government

of the Church is vested in the ministers, who have received their commission from Christ, its Head and supreme Governor; that they are constituted a separate and distinct order of men; and that their function and authority are compatible with the civil supremacy of the sovereign, it remains to investigate in the next place their several ranks and gradations, and their peculiar offices.

CHAPTER III.

ON CHURCH MINISTERS.

1. SEVERAL offices were at first instituted in the Christian Church, for "God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues," 1 Cor. xii. 28.; comp. Ephes. iv. 11. Some of these were evidently of an extraordinary nature, and appertained exclusively to the primitive times; setting aside, however, such as were intended to serve a temporary purpose; there are others confessedly of perpetual utility, and universal obligation. But how many, and of what kind are they? Is there a gradation among them? or, are they all equal and co-ordinate? The Episcopalians maintain a triple distinction of rank and order; on the other hand, it is the belief of most Protestant Dissenters that the only *permanent* ecclesiastical

offices to be found in the New Testament are bishops and deacons; the office of the former being to attend to the spiritual concerns of the Church; of the latter, to direct its temporal affairs; and that among these there are no gradations. According to this, they admit only one order of spiritual officers properly so called, that of deacon being of a secular nature, much the same as our modern churchwarden.

Upon this single point, then, the controversy hinges, and it must be inquired whether the Gospel sanctions a PARITY or an IMPARITY in the Christian ministry; for, if the Saviour hath instituted only one order with co-ordinate powers; Episcopacy will be incapable of any satisfactory defence.

II.—1. A perfect parity is supposed to be declared by our blessed Lord, in Matt. xx. 25.; xxiii. 8, 9.; Luke xxii. 25, 26. These texts, it was shown in the former part of this work, are not opposed to a Church establishment¹; and they are as little so to an imparity among Church officers. On the other hand, both the occasion and the expressions used by Christ favour a distinction of orders in the ministry. The occasion of them was a contention among the Apostles, who should be the greatest, which could hardly have arisen if they had been taught that all the members of the Christian ministry were equal in

¹ P. I. chap. ii. § ii. 2.

rank, and co-ordinate in jurisdiction; but such contests were very likely to originate with those who knew that our Lord intended different orders and ranks in it. His words cannot well be explained on any other supposition; for they certainly imply that a priority and pre-eminence of some above others should exist among the teachers and governors of the Church; that some should be "great," some "chief," some "less," some "serving¹." In each of these passages he enforces the precept by proposing his own example; and, as he exercised a spiritual power over the Apostles, it could not be his design to forbid in the Apostles the exercise of the same power over others. The general import, therefore, is, that the Apostles and their successors were not to indulge a worldly ambition, or to tyrannize over their brethren; but that although a gradation of ranks was to exist in the ministry, the superiors were to treat the inferiors with kindness and humility, of which he set the example in coming not to be ministered unto, but to minister.

2. Christ, it is urged, gave only one commission to those to whom he delegated the office of teaching and baptizing all nations, Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.; and as the commission is but one, there can be but one order of ministers, invested with

¹ In Luke, νεώτερος, *younger*, evidently means inferior in dignity.

a parity of powers.—True; so far as regards the Apostles personally, and their successors in the episcopal office; and this forms a valid argument against the pretended pre-eminency of St. Peter, and the bishops of Rome; but none at all against the gradation of ministers under them. The commission itself empowers the Apostles to disciple all nations, to incorporate them into a spiritual society, and to prescribe both the model of its government, and the laws by which it was to be regulated; but it was left to them to make choice of such means and such officers, and to invest them with such powers, as they, through the guidance of the Spirit, with which they were afterwards endued, should judge the most effectual to attain this object. As they might, if they saw fit, make a distinction in ecclesiastical offices, the question resolves itself into this, whether they actually did so. How, then, did they act, in erecting the visible Church? They, as is acknowledged on all hands, instituted in it at least two different orders, bishops and deacons; they appointed Timothy and Titus with *some* jurisdiction over others; consequently they did not construe their commission as militating against an imparity in Church ministers, or they would have violated it in their own practice.

3. The chief stress, however, is laid upon the circumstance that in the New Testament “bishop” and “elder” are only different terms

for the same office; a position, as it should seem, resting on the strongest evidence. In Acts xx. 17. St. Paul summoned "the elders of the church," who in the 28th verse are called "overseers" (in the Greek "bishops"). He addresses an epistle "to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons." It cannot be supposed that there were many bishops, in the strict sense, at Philippi, or if there had, that he would omit mentioning them while he addresses the deacons; and therefore the term "bishop" is used for "elder" or "presbyter." The same apostle in his first epistle to Timothy lays down the qualifications of bishops and deacons, without saying a word of presbyters; which can only be accounted for on the supposition that he used "bishop" and "elder" as convertible terms, especially as it is certain there were many elders at Ephesus. He also left Titus in Crete to "ordain elders in every city," ch. i. 5; which is immediately explained, "for a bishop must be blameless," &c. St. Peter in 1 Ep. v. 1, 2. exhorts the "presbyters" to "feed the flock of God, taking the oversight thereof (*ἐπισκοποῦντες* exercising the office of a bishop), not by constraint," &c.

On this testimony it is willingly conceded that the terms are, sometimes at least, used indiscriminately, but it by no means follows that all presbyters were of the same rank, or that they were the same in office with those who

were afterwards called "bishops" in an eminent sense. Presbyters, it is allowed, were invested with the same powers as those who are denominated bishops in the New Testament; but it cannot be inferred from this that there were no superior church officers, invested with the additional power to govern and ordain. As well might it be urged that there was no high priest in the Jewish polity, because all the three orders are sometimes included under the names of priests and Levites. If such a mode of argument were admitted, it might be proved that every presbyter and every deacon was an apostle, because these titles are given to the apostles, 1 Pet. v. 1; 2 John 1; 3 John 1; 1 Cor. iii. 5; 2 Cor. iii. 6; vi. 4; xi. 23; Ephes. iii. 7; Col. i. 23, 25. Nay, because Christ is called an apostle by St. Paul, Heb. iii. 1; and a bishop by St. Peter, 1 Pet. ii. 25; it might be argued that every apostle and every bishop—but I shrink from the irreverence of even mentioning the consequence. From the promiscuous use of the terms, therefore, nothing can be concluded as to a parity of rank or powers.

Nothing is more common than for words to be used at first in a general, and afterwards in a restrained sense. Such has been the fate of the terms angel, apostle, bishop, presbyter, deacon, and a multitude of others, which had originally a very comprehensive meaning; but at different times, and under altered circumstances,

came to be applied in a definite and peculiar signification. He who exercised the episcopal office, it is probable, was at the outset called by the titles "apostle" or "angel;" but in process of time the former of these terms was restricted to those who are properly so called, and the latter to superior beings, while the term bishop was given to him who had formerly borne these titles; yet, as Hooker observes, because the things themselves are always ancients than their names, that power of chief ecclesiastical overseers, which the term bishop imports, existed before the restrained use of the name which imports it. The objection, then, raised from the community of names rather confirms than weakens the main argument for the episcopal rank and order.

4. It is further urged that the same qualifications and powers are ascribed both to bishops and presbyters; thus plainly establishing an identity of order and office. In Scripture language, it is acknowledged, the two terms are employed to denote the same office; and of course under whichever name it is mentioned, the same characters will be attributed to it. But if it be meant that in the apostolic age there was not an office superior to what was *then* called indifferently a bishop or presbyter, to which the term bishop is *now* restricted, it is a mere begging of the question; for this is the matter in dispute. It is idle to demur about a name. Every bi-

shop, we contend, is both a presbyter and deacon; at the same time we contend for a distinct order above mere presbyters, and having the chief superintendence over the concerns of the church.

The whole of the direct scriptural evidence worth mentioning for a ministerial parity has now been produced; and it presents a humiliating view of the human intellect that such fierce contentions should have been raised about a matter, to which the evidence adduced not only lends no support, but even inclines the other way.

III. In entering upon the evidence on the other side, it may be observed that, if *any* ministerial imparity can be established, it will be sufficient to uproot to their very foundations the systems of Presbyterianism and Independency, resting as they do upon a parity; but for the confirmation of the Episcopalian system it is requisite in addition to produce scriptural grounds for a threefold rank or order in the Christian ministry, with such a distinction as places the chief governorship in one order.

In pursuing this design, we must separate what is essential from what is adventitious, local, and mutable. Some things in the Episcopate have necessarily changed with the change in the condition of mankind; and it were folly to insist that the bishops, presbyters, and deacons in the primitive church were in all respects pre-

cisely similar to those in the Anglican Church: "The simple," says Hooker, "lacking judgment and knowledge to discern between the nature of things which changeth not; and these outward variable accidents, are made believe that a bishop heretofore and now are things in their very nature so distinct that they cannot be judged the same. Yet to men that have any part of skill, what more evident and plain in Bishops, than that augmentation or diminution in their precincts, allowances, privileges, and such like, do make a difference indeed, but no essential difference between one bishop and another¹." Now that which is essential to the Episcopal regimen, and which distinguishes it from all others, is the control and superintendency of a single church officer over the rest; all, therefore, that the judicious advocates of Episcopacy contend for is, that by divine institution there is a triple distinction of orders in the ministry, giving to one a power and pre-eminency over the other two². Hence, to show

¹ Eccles. Pol. lib. 7. § 2.

² Quæritur tantummodo, utrum Apostoli, priusquam ex hac vita migrarint, hanc suam Ecclesiæ regendæ aliorumque ordinandi potestatem uni alicui in unaquaque ecclesia personæ, an pluribus commiserint? hoc est, juxta recentiorum loquendi formulam, utrum of Episcopo, an classi Presbyterorum. Beveridge, Codex, Can. Vind. cap. 11. § 13. So Hammond, Vind. of Diss. on Episcopacy. in Works, vol. 2. p. 2; Chillingworth, Apostol. Inst. of Episcopacy. Some Dissenters, and especially some of the older Nonconformists, appear to have had no serious objections to

the scriptural foundation of Episcopacy ample evidence must be brought from the New Testament for three gradations of ministers, of whom one is of superior rank, and invested with appropriate authority over the others. This, therefore, must now be attempted.

1. The Deity, so far as his mind is revealed to us in the scriptures, is opposed to an equality. In the Godhead of the triune Jehovah a mysterious subordination exists¹. In the scattered intimations afforded of the angelic host may be found a system of orders and degrees, authorities, principalities, powers, mights, thrones, dominions, Col. i. 16.; ii. 10.; 1 Pet. iii. 22. The Jewish polity was divinely constructed upon a similar system of various orders, some superior, some inferior, with appropriate rank and duties. The scriptural directions which relate to the political and social state, both suppose and sanction a division of power, and a gradation of ranks. If the attention be directed to the material world, we discover a scale of being, diversified and descending from rationality to vegetable life. Throughout the volumes of nature and revelation, wherever the Deity has declared his

Episcopacy so defined. Testimonies to this effect have been collected by Bps. Hall, Sage, and Stillingfleet, Drs. Wells and Bennet, and others mentioned in the List of Authors. I have noted several others in the course of this inquiry.

¹ See the Author's Script. Test. to the Divinity of Christ, cap. 9.

mind and will, it is in favour of a subordination; wherever we contemplate the operations of his hands, there a subordination reigns; wherever he has made known his designs and arrangements, we trace a principle of subordination; and can it be supposed that the gospel dispensation, in which the Divine attributes are most illustriously displayed, is an exception; that there, and there alone, he has ordained a different mode of procedure? So improbable is the supposition, that this argument from analogy alone, if there were no others, may assure us that a gradation in the ministry is consistent with the Divine will of the Author and finisher of our faith.

2. Our Saviour, whilst he lived on earth, employed two sorts of ministers under him, the twelve Apostles and the seventy Disciples, between whom there were some remarkable differences. The apostles were ordained to be with our Lord, Mark iii. 14. They were his constant attendants, and were emphatically called "the twelve;" whereas the seventy were not admitted into the same intimate society with him. The apostles were commanded to preach the gospel to all the Jews, and to proselyte all nations; but the seventy were only sent "before his face into every city and place whither he himself would come," in order to prepare the people for his reception, Luke x. 1. Though the commission was in most points the same,

the two offices could not be equal in authority; for one of the seventy, as is generally allowed, was elected to fill the vacant place in the apostolate, Acts i. 21, 22. The apostles, moreover, were endued with more extensive powers than those which were conferred upon the seventy, since to them were appropriated the power of cleansing lepers, raising the dead, and regulating all matters pertaining to the Church.

It is not material to ascertain precisely the points of difference, nor whether the office of the seventy was permanent, or only temporary; it is quite enough for the argument to prove *some* distinction between them and the apostles; which cannot in fairness be denied. Here then was an imparity, and an imparity consisting of a three-fold gradation in the first founders of Christianity. Would our Lord have admitted it, if such a distinction of rank were alien to the character of his ministers and stewards? Omnipotence cannot be limited in the choice of instruments; and his employment of different orders in the first promulgation of the Gospel amounts to a tacit declaration that the employment of different orders cannot be improper in its subsequent promulgation. This inference, as it seems, cannot be avoided without some equally clear declaration to the contrary, which, as we have seen, is not to be found in the sacred scriptures.

3. The commission given by Christ at first to the Apostles, has been shewn in No. 1. of

the preceding chapter, to be an investment of Church authority in Church ministers; and, if words have any meaning, it contains a provision for its continued renewal to the end of the world. The object of the commission implies permanency; and permanency necessarily involves the power of delegation. The declaration "as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you," evidently confers a power upon the apostles to transfer their authority to others, in the same way as our Saviour himself gave them authority, under the mission which he had received from his Father. The reign of the Messiah was foretold in the ancient prophecies as being an universal and everlasting dominion; and as Jesus appointed unto them a kingdom, as the Father appointed unto him, the kingdom which he thus appointed unto them must be continued for ever; which implies the power of delegation.

All doubt of this is removed by our Saviour's promise, "Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world;" which certainly was not intended merely to apply to the apostles individually, for they were not to live so long; and as it could not be fulfilled in the persons of the apostles, it is a plain and express declaration that they were to be succeeded by others in *the same office* to whom the promise should extend. In one sense the apostles were to be alive till the end of the world, or Christ could not be with **THEM** till his second coming; but as they all died in the usual course of nature,

it follows that there are to be some who represent them, with whom our Saviour will be to the end of the world. Hence there must be successors to the apostolic authority, or Christ's promise has undoubtedly failed.

Nor is the inference affected by the miraculous powers with which the apostles were invested; for these were quite distinct and separable from the office of the apostolate; which therefore was not necessarily abolished by the removal of the former¹. The miraculous gift of healing was enjoyed by some presbyters, as we learn from James v. 14, 15; but it would be absurd to argue that the office of a presbyter is abolished, because it is no longer accompanied with this extraordinary gift. Stephen and Philip were only deacons, Acts vi. 5., yet the former "did great wonders and miracles among the people," ver. 8., and the latter did many miracles, casting out unclean spirits, and healing "many taken with palsies, and that were lame," Acts viii. 6, 7. Are we to suppose that the office itself is abrogated, because deacons are now unable to perform such wonderful works? Nothing can be more fallacious than to argue against the continuance of an ecclesiastical office because the extraordinary gifts with which, for wise and benevolent purposes, it was at first attended, have long since ceased. Inspiration

¹ See P. ii. ch. ii. § ii. 1.

and miraculous powers, though superadded to it, formed no essential part of the apostolical office; they were peculiar and personal to the apostles, and the authority which emanated from this source must of necessity have terminated with their lives; but all that was transferable, the entire powers of the sacerdotal jurisdiction, must be continued to succeeding ministers; otherwise Christ *will not be with them*, with persons of a ministerial office like unto themselves, to the end of the world.

To elude this inference, the phrase is explained to mean the end of the Jewish age or economy. But such an interpretation is inconsistent with the expression "always" (πάντα τὰς ἡμέρας, *at all times*); the Greek phrase, also, rendered "the end of the world," occurs in five other places, Matt. xiii. 19, 40, 49; xxiv. 3; Heb. ix. 26.; in the three first of which it evidently means, in the literal sense, *the end of the world*, as it probably does in the remaining two; and other reasons may be found in the commentators for so understanding it in this place. It is also explained of the end of the apostles' own age; which is as little satisfactory as the former; for the expression is *never* used in that sense; and when the age of human life is spoken of, it is by a different word (γενεά) which is used about thirty times in the New Testament to signify man's natural age, or a generation. Some, dissatisfied with these glosses, take the

whole in the literal sense, and assert that the apostles actually carried the tidings of the gospel into *all* nations, both of the old and the new world; while others limit it to all nations only which they had an opportunity of visiting¹. Expositions so strained scarcely deserve a serious refutation. The obvious and real meaning of Christ's promise is, that he would by his Spirit be with them, and likewise with those who should succeed them in the sacerdotal office so long as the world should endure. Such succession implies some similarity of office; kings succeed kings, generals succeed generals, bishops succeed bishops; in all conditions those only can be said to succeed who enjoy the same office as their predecessors, though it may be with some difference of powers; the apostolic and episcopal authority then was to be delegated to, and perpetuated in an order of ministers, deriving their appointment and commission in regular succession from the apostles.

4. The first act of the apostles after Christ's ascension, was the election of Matthias to fill the vacant place in the apostolate; because, says St. Peter, "of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained

¹ See Witsius, Miscel. Sac. Exercit. xiii. xlv.

to be a witness with us of his resurrection," Acts i. 21, 22. They therefore appointed two, and prayed the Lord to shew "whether of these two thou hast chosen, that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell," ver. 24, 25. Nothing can be imagined more absurd than this if they had known that the office was merely personal, and was to expire with themselves. Both the act itself, and the reason assigned for it, clearly evince a conviction that it was to be continued, in all that was substantive and essential to it, after they were removed from the stage. Our Lord's approval of it also sanctions the example, that, as the eleven proceeded to add another in the room of Judas, so others should be appointed to the office after their decease. But the apostles, it is universally acknowledged, were the highest order of ministers, having the power delegated to them by Christ to rule and govern the Church. Therefore it must have been the Divine will and intention that the office, in all its essential parts, should be continued; and that a ministerial order of men should exist, in perpetual succession, above presbyters and deacons, to be the rulers and governors of the Church.

5. Of this additional confirmation is afforded by the subsequent conduct of the Apostles. In execution of the commission with which they were intrusted, they "ordained elders in every church," Acts xiv. 23.; 2 Tim. ii. 6.; and the

twelve together ordained the seven deacons, ch. vi. 3. They also appointed inferior ministers under them, as Mark was first to Paul and Barnabas, ch. xii. 25.; xiii. 5.; and afterwards to Barnabas alone, ch. xv. 39. Timotheus and Erastus ministered to Paul, ch. xix. 22.; and Luke, the evangelist, is spoken of in the latter part of the Acts as his constant attendant; ch. xvi. 12., et seq.; xx. 6, 13.; xxi. 1, 3.; xxvii. 2, 3.; xxviii. 2, 16. These, and others mentioned in the Epistles of St. Paul, attended upon, and ministered to the Apostles, who, whatever was done in the government of the churches, and to whomsoever it was committed in their absence, still retained a superintending and controlling power in their own hands; and others only acted in subordination to them. It will scarcely be pretended that all to whom they delegated any office were co-equal and co-ordinate; for there were diversities of administrations in the Apostolic Church; and thus, as the practice of the Apostles is a model for imitation, by adopting an imparity among the first labourers in the Lord's vineyard, they have sanctioned its continuance among those whose office it is to promulgate the Gospel in all future ages.

6. In 1 Cor. xii. 5. it is declared that "there are diversities of administrations, but the same Lord." The word (*διακονία*) here used certainly denotes *an ecclesiastical office, a ministration, or ministry*, as it is frequently rendered in

been employed for the edifying of the Church, which is the body of Christ, and that too, by Divine appointment; for the expressions “he gave,” and “hath set,” in the passage from the Corinthians, unquestionably signify a Divine institution. The Almighty, then, did institute an imparity among the first evangelical preachers; and what was *then* accordant with the spirituality of the Gospel, must in principle be accordant with it *for ever*.

8. The apostolical institution of Episcopacy may be gathered from the example of the mother-church of Jerusalem. It was composed of a numerous body of believers, divided into several worshipping congregations¹; and the Apostles, during the period of their abode in that city, were the supreme governors of it; but afterwards this office was delegated to James. There were two of this name in the number of “the twelve,” James the son of Zebedee, and James the son of Alphaeus; and also another James, as some contend, who was not one of the Apostles. But this is a question not essential to the argument, which is that a person called James was, in the life-time of the Apostles, appointed to preside over the Jerusalem church; and this is evidenced by the following considerations.

When Peter was delivered by the angel out of prison, he bid some of his disciples to go,

¹ See P. ii. ch. i. § iv. 1.

and show these things to James, and to the brethren," Acts xii. 17.; but why was he particularly named, unless he possessed some pre-eminency in that Church? In the council held at Jerusalem, "when there had been much disputing," St. Peter addressed the assembly; then Paul and Barnabas; and finally James, Gal. ii. 12; summed up the argument, and pronounced the decision, "wherefore MY sentence is," &c. ch. xv. 19. The act itself shows him to have presided in that council, and the authoritative terms of the sentence import him to be a principal person in it; which must have been with the approbation of the Apostles. When St. Paul and his company arrived at Jerusalem from their travels, the historian says, "the day following, Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present," &c. ch. xxi. 18. The expression implies a person of chief authority among the converts; for it could not be said that they "went in unto James" so specifically, if he had not been their head and president. St. Paul calls some persons of the church of Jerusalem, who came to Antioch, "certain who came from James," which, as Archbishop Potter observes, "implies that James was the head of that church, otherwise they should rather have been said to come from Jerusalem, or from the church of that place¹." They must have been persons of note, or Peter would not have "feared them;"

¹ Disc. on Ch. Gov. p. 83.

and if James sent them, he must have been invested with authority; if he did not, they could only be said to "come from him," because they belonged to the church over which he had the presidency.

These circumstances prove satisfactorily that James filled the Episcopal chair of Jerusalem, where elders were stationed, for frequent mention is made of them as men of official responsibility, and as being concerned in the care of the church; Acts xi. 30.; xv. 2, 4, 22, 23.; xvi. 4.; xxi. 18. Deacons were also solemnly ordained by the Apostles, ch. vi. 2., et seq.; and that their office was of a spiritual nature will be shown hereafter. Here, then, in the first and mother-church we find three distinct orders of ministers, James being the head. If even the Episcopate of James be rejected, we shall still find in it a three-fold ministry, apostles, elders, and deacons, with a subordination of the two latter to the first, in principle corresponding to those whom we call bishops, priests, and deacons. Sufficient evidence, however, has been adduced for the opinion that James was appointed by the Apostles to be in their stead, after their dispersion from Jerusalem.

9. In the history of Paul's travels, we find a manifest distinction of orders in the ministry. John, whose surname was Mark, was an "evangelist, or teacher," Col. iv. 10; 2 Tim. iv. 11;

¹ Dis. on Ch. Gov., p. 83.

and "minister" to the apostles, Acts xii. 12, 25. Silas, or Silvanus, was a "prophet," Acts xv. 32. Timotheus was an "evangelist," and "minister" to Paul, 2 Cor. i. 19; Acts xix. 22. At Antioch we find those who first converted the believers there, were distinguished by the names of "prophets" and "teachers," Acts xiii. 1, comp. ch. xi. 19, 20, and also a third order superior to them, that is to say, the apostles Paul and Barnabas, Acts xi. 22, 26. xiv. 4, 14. St. Paul directs an epistle to the bishops, deacons, and saints, at Philippi. In short, whenever we read of any apostolic act for the settlement and government of the converts, we there meet with an imparity among the spiritual agents employed for that purpose: so that nothing can be plainer than the existence of a gradation of ranks in the ministry during the apostolic age.

Not only were several orders of ministers appointed in the nascent church, and a subordination ordained among them; but we plainly recognize three distinct ranks, apostles, presbyters, and deacons. It is not meant to be implied that all the means adopted for the first planting of the gospel are a model for after times; it was a proceeding extraordinary and miraculous, and the apostles were under a special illumination of the Spirit; but the fact is indisputable that a subordination actually existed among the ecclesiastical persons of that age; and can it be be-

lieved that the Spirit would guide the apostles to do what was contrary to the true nature and design of the Christian ministry in future times? Make what allowances you please on the score of extraordinary circumstances attending that period, a gradation undoubtedly prevailed in it, and it may be truly said by the special appointment of God; it cannot, then, be wrong, either in a moral or religious view, since God cannot be the author of sin¹; and as there is nothing either in reason, or in the sacred Scriptures, against it, the example thus afforded merits in this, as it assuredly does in other respects, the imitation of all succeeding ages.

10. The essence and principle of episcopacy, as before observed, consist in the control and superintendence of one minister over others; and of this conclusive evidence is supplied in the epistles to Timothy and Titus. Besides two orders, bishops or presbyters, for in this discussion the two words are assumed to be synonymous, and deacons, whose qualifications are largely described in these epistles, a governing power over them is committed by St. Paul to Timothy at Ephesus, and to Titus in Crete, as will be manifest by considering the following particulars.

First, they are empowered to select and ordain fit persons for the ministry. Timothy is

¹ See P. 1. ch. ii. § iii. 3.

enjoined to—"lay hands suddenly on no man," that is, not to ordain any one to a sacred office without due caution¹, 1 Tim. v. 22. "The things which thou hast heard of me—commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others," 2 Tim. ii. 2. "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest ordain elders in every city," Tit. i. 5. The original word (*καθίστημι*) is stronger than the authorized version, *to ordain*, for it implies the *choosing* and *appointing* to an office: and the authority for this is vested solely in Titus. The special directions also given to Timothy and Titus respecting the character and qualifications of those to be ordained elders or deacons, implies the power to choose and to select.

Secondly, to Timothy and Titus was committed the authority to superintend the doctrine and conduct of the presbyters, and to admonish, to rebuke, and punish the offenders. "Charge some," says the apostle to Timothy, "that they teach no other doctrine," 1 Tim. i. 3. "Let these (the deacons) also first be proved," ch. iii. 10. "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour," ch. v. 17; viz. see that they have a liberal maintenance out of the

¹ Hamond interprets this of laying on of hands in the absolution of penitents, and Heinrichs of laying them on to heal the sick, N. T. ed. Koppiana in loc.; but neither are supported by evidence. That it applies to the ordination of presbyters and deacons there is no doubt: see Whitby's excellent note.

public stock. "Against an elder (presbyter) receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses," ch. v. 19¹. The commands to Titus are, "These things speak, and exhort and rebuke with all authority," Tit. ii. 15. "A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject," ch. iii. 10, which commands, unaccompanied with any restrictions, must extend to the trying and judging of presbyters. Those who have authority like this to inquire into and visit the conduct of ministers in the discharge of their spiritual office, have that official superiority for which we are contending.

Thirdly, Timothy and Titus were empowered to regulate such matters in the church as were not settled by express divine command. St. Paul says to Timothy, "I charge thee—that thou observe these things (which the apostle had been above enjoining) without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality," 1 Tim. v. 21. Again, "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly; but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God," ch. iii. 14, 15. A general power is thus plainly delegated to Timothy, to order and regulate the affairs of the church, and certain directions are

¹ 1 Tim. v. 20, probably means "them (the elders) that sin rebuke before all, that others (*οἱ λοιποὶ*, *the rest*, i. e. of elders) may fear;" but it may refer to the people at large.

given him for its exercise. So also to Titus, "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting," Tit. i. 5, viz. left undone, as rendered in the margin; such things as were left unarranged and unsettled by the apostle. Words can scarcely more clearly express an authority to preside over and regulate church matters.

Fourthly, this will be further apparent from a comparison of these charges with that delivered to the elders of Ephesus, Acts xx. 28, et seq. A positive and remarkable distinction is observable. They are enjoined to take heed unto themselves and to THE FLOCK, to feed and rule IT, to watch against the grievous wolves, the false teachers, which would enter into IT. Their functions were only pastoral; they had no right to ordain, no right of discipline over any of their own body, no right of government in the church. Timothy and Titus, on the contrary, are charged with the power to select proper persons for the ministry, to examine and prove them, to ordain them, to see that they are suitably maintained, to direct, admonish, rebuke, and to expel the offending; and, finally, to regulate and settle all those matters which required to be arranged in the churches. Such is the great and characteristic difference between the powers ascribed to the elders on the one hand, and to Timothy and Titus on the other; the duties of the former are those of a pastor in the midst of his flock,

of the latter, those of a bishop in his diocese ; the authority of the one is decidedly presbyteral, of the others, as decidedly episcopal.

Here, then, is direct and positive proof that, in settling the Ephesian and Cretan Churches, the apostle ordained two orders, presbyters and deacons, with a superintendant, having authority over them, such as is called in the ecclesiastical sense a bishop. Some objections, however, have been made, which shall now be noticed.

1. If the argument from the case of Timothy and Titus be valid, it is said, it will prove too much; since, if they were bishops, the apostles sustained a still higher office, and consequently there are *four* orders in the church instead of *three*. No one disputes that the apostles were far superior to all others in inspiration and miraculous powers ; but a difference of gifts does not of itself constitute a difference of order. The prelates of the Anglican Church differ much in learning and intellectual endowments, yet they are all equally prelates. In consequence of their extraordinary powers the apostles, while they lived, exercised extraordinary authority ; and whether they should be called a separate order is little more than a dispute about words¹.

¹ A learned and excellent writer, Dr. John Scott, includes the ministers by whom Christ ruled his kingdom under a fourfold rank and order ; 1st, the Holy Ghost ; 2d, the angels of God ; 3d, princes and civil governors ; 4th, the bishops and pastors of the church. See the Christian Life, vol. II. cap. vii. § 9.

What was peculiar to them cannot *now* exist in the church; and the *sole* question is, whether for the future government of it they appointed three distinct ranks of ministers, to one of which was communicated a controlling and episcopal power over the other two. Now it has been proved that Timothy and Titus were sent to Ephesus and Crete with full powers to regulate what was

ordain presbyters, and to govern the laical believers in all spiritual which the inference is undeniable, the commissioned these two to exercise in their respective churches, an office which in proper and ecclesiastical sense was

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Timothy and Titus, it is objected, are in scripture called bishops. Granted; but this amounts to, since it is allowed that bishop and presbyter are used in the New Testament as identical? About words there is no dispute; if they had the powers of the office in the strict sense, it is no matter by what name they may be denominated. It has been observed that those who are now called bishops were at first styled apostles; and that with others is actually so named by Paul, when he says they are the messengers of the Gospel, 1 Cor. viii. 23, where the Greek is apostles; and Timothy seems to have the same title on comparing 1 Thess. i. 1. with ch. ii. 6. Others also are called apostles

who were not appointed personally by Christ, as Matthias, Acts i. 26 ; Epaphroditus, Phil. ii. 25 ; for the Greek is apostle, though our received version has "messenger;" Barnabas, Acts xiv. 4, 14 ; and probably Apollos, 1 Cor. iv. 6. compared with ver. 9 ; and Andronicus and Junia, "who were of note among the apostles," Rom. xvi. 7. We also read of "false apostles," 2 Cor. xi. 13 ; and of others "which say they are apostles," Revel. ii. 2. It is highly probable that some of these held an episcopal office ; this at least is certain, that the term "apostle" was not restricted to "the twelve;" and, as no objection can reasonably be made from the promiscuous use of "bishop" and "elder," so ought none to be made to Timothy and Titus not being called bishops, when "apostle" was at first the more usual name.

3. It is urged as the grand objection, by our adversaries, that Timothy and Titus were "evangelists," which they consider as an office peculiar and extraordinary ; and therefore incapable of succession, or of becoming perpetual in ecclesiastical administration. The appellation "evangelist" only occurs Acts xxi. 8 ; Ephes. iv. 11 ; 2 Tim. iv. 5 ; from which passages its exact import cannot be determined ; and the opinion of primitive antiquity may be seen in Suicer's Thesaurus. But it does not appear to have designated any particular rank in the ministry, for in the first of the texts referred to Philip,

the deacon is called an evangelist; in the second, evangelists are placed *after* prophets; and in the third, St. Paul commands his beloved son to "do the work of an evangelist," which may mean no more than this, Do the work which is required from every preacher of the Gospel; and so it will not be the appellation of any particular office.

But whatever may be signified by the term, there is not a single text in which Titus is declared to be an evangelist; with respect to him, therefore, the objection is totally irrelevant. And supposing we allow Timothy to have been an evangelist, it will not follow that he was not also a bishop, in the appropriate sense of the term, unless the two offices were incompatible, and could not co-exist in the same person. But this never can be proved; and the fair presumption is in favour of their union; that the same persons might be evangelists while attending on the apostles in their journeyings, and bishops when settled in the charge of some city or province. A bishop is both a presbyter and a deacon; and, as far as appears from the scriptural use of the term, may have been also an evangelist, if even we suppose it to be the title of a specific office. Timothy was a presbyter, as is clear from his being exhorted to teach and to preach, 1 Tim. iv. 11; vi. 2; 2 Tim. iv. 2; and likewise a deacon, for he is called "a minister of God," 1 Thess. iii. 2; where the Greek is

διάκονον τοῦ Θεοῦ, God's deacon ; and in 2 Tim. iv. 5. is exhorted to "make full proof of his ministry;" rather, as it may be translated, to "fulfil the office of a deacon." As the sustaining these offices was compatible with the episcopate of Timothy, so was it, supposing him to have been an evangelist.

4. Another objection is, that Timothy and Titus were not stationary, but itinerant ministers, without a fixed residence any where, and consequently could have no permanent relation to the churches of Ephesus and Crete. It is here supposed that a bishop, in the appropriate sense of the term, must have a fixed abode in his diocese, so that he cannot stir from it to any great distance, or for any considerable time; but what proof is there for this assumption? Such permanent residence is not essential to the office of a bishop; it is not enforced in this kingdom; and a regular periodical visitation might be all that was requisite for the discharge of the episcopal duties in 'the apostolic age. Suppose, then, we admit that neither Timothy nor Titus were strictly stationary, but travelled about; suppose we further admit that their appointment to Ephesus and Crete was temporary; yet, whatever length of time they stayed in these places, they regulated all the affairs of the churches, exercising a control and superintendency therein, which proves their episcopal office and character; and whatever length of

time they exercised it, they received it by immediate transmission from St. Paul, which proves the apostolical succession.

But the assertion that Timothy and Titus had no permanent connexion with the Ephesian and Cretan churches, is wholly destitute of proof. We have, it is true, several notices in the New Testament of their attendance upon St. Paul in his travels; for Timothy, for instance, is joined with him in his epistles to the Thessalonians, the Philippians, and in the second to the Corinthians, written from several places; and other passages import the same, both with respect to him, and to Titus. Yet there is the greatest reason for believing that all these journeys were finished, and all these epistles were written, before the appointments of Timothy and Titus as bishops of Ephesus and Crete. The truth of this statement cannot be shown without entering at large into that most embarrassing subject, the chronology of the Pauline travels and epistles; but it is agreed by the best writers that such was the case. At least the itinerancy of Timothy and Titus after receiving the charge of the Ephesian and Cretan Churches cannot be proved; and, if it could, it would form no valid objection against their episcopate.

5. The Assembly of Divines urge in a triumphant tone that, "if Timothy was bishop of Ephesus, it must be when the first epistle was written. But it was after this, when Paul came

to Miletus accompanied by Timothy, and sends for the elders of the Church of Ephesus unto him, and commends the government of the church unto these elders, whom he calls bishops. Now surely, if Timothy had been constituted their bishop, in the sense of our adversaries, the apostle would not have called the elders bishops before their bishop's face, and instead of giving a charge to the elders to feed the flock of Christ, he would have given that charge to Timothy, and not to them. And no doubt he would have given some directions to the elders how to carry themselves towards their bishop. And because none of these things were done, it is a clear demonstration to us, that Timothy was not at that time bishop of Ephesus¹."

Now all this, with the exception of the first sentence, is mere gratuitous assumption, and not only without proof, but contrary to the best supported chronology; according to which Timothy was constituted bishop *after* the assembly was held at Miletus, and that the first epistle to him was written *after* St. Paul's first imprisonment at Rome². But waiving this, and allowing

¹ Jus Divinum Ministerii, Part II. p. 65.

² Those who, like the author, shall examine the principal writers on the subject, will probably come to this conclusion. See Cave, Pearson's Annales, Benson's History, Lardner, Mac-knight, Hartwell's Horne's invaluable Introduction, &c. But Dr. Burton, in his recent Chronology of the Acts, dates the first Ep. to Tim. A.D. 52, and the synod at Miletus, A.D. 53.

that Timothy was appointed to superintend the Church of Ephesus *before* the assembly of the Ephesian elders, why should it be deemed incompatible with this fact for the apostle to have done what is stated in the latter part of the objection? He addressed them upon the subject of *their* duty towards *their* flocks; to this he confines himself; and it is childish to infer from it that there could be no superior church officer at that period. If a metropolitan were to address the clergy of any diocese on the pastoral office, without mentioning or alluding to the diocesan bishop, the inference would be absurd that they had then no bishop over them. The objection is therefore futile; and moreover cannot at all apply to the case of Titus.

Objections, then, so weak and forceless as those which have been reviewed, cannot be allowed to shake the conclusion, that Timothy and Titus were invested with real episcopal jurisdiction; and as they were so invested by an apostle who in his official conduct acted by the delegated authority of Christ, and the guidance of inspiration, episcopacy is clearly of apostolical institution; and therefore to be adopted as the model of church government in all future ages.

11. The seven apocalyptic epistles are addressed to the seven angels of the churches, Revel. ii. iii. As it would be too absurd to suppose these angels were heavenly spirits, they must be the designation of some individual or

individuals in their several churches. That they do not denote the collective body of Christians in the churches is evident, since they are figured under the emblems of seven stars, which are expressly distinguished from the seven churches, which are represented by seven candlesticks, ch. i. 29; and that in each instance a single person is meant is manifest from the employment of the singular number. They are constantly mentioned as individual persons, "THE angel of the Church of Ephesus," "THE angel of the Church of Smyrna," and so of the rest; "I know THY works and THY labour," and so on. There were seven angels, and one in each church, which plainly characterizes a single person; and when the people are spoken of, as contradistinguished from the angels, then the plural number is used, ch. ii. 10, 13, 23, 24, 25.

From this circumstance, indeed, it is attempted to infer that the term "angel" does not denote a single church officer, but the whole body of elders or ministers in each of the churches. But no instance can be produced from Scripture where "an angel" or "a star" are emblems of a plurality of personages; and the context, where the pronouns "you" and "your" are used, shows that these relatives refer to the people. Thus in ch. ii. 10. "The devil shall cast some of you into prison," &c. the distinction between the angel and the people, to whom this refers, is too evident to be denied. In ver. 23—25, the

meaning is, "I will give unto every one of you (the fore-mentioned churches) according to your works. But unto you (churches) I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira," &c. or, as the text both of Griesbach and Scholz is, "But to you the rest (*i. e.* the rest of you) in Thyatira, I say," &c. The seven epistles were not sent to each church separately, but form a part of one discourse communicated to St. John; and it is no wonder that in the epistle directed to one of them some things should have reference to the other churches. Nor is it surprising that in addressing the angels personally, our Lord should occasionally turn to the people under their government and inspection. Thus, St. Paul writes to Timothy, "The Lord be with thy spirit. Grace be with you," 2 Tim. iv. 22; so Phil. iv. 1—3; and cases of similar transitions are frequent in the Scriptures. The passages in fact which are supposed to prove that the angels were not single persons prove the contrary; since, if they did not denote individuals, what reason can be assigned why our Saviour should not mention them plurally, as well as the people?

By the angels, then, single persons are intended; and our Lord directs the beloved apostle to write to them, as having the control and superintendency over the Asiatic churches. This may be gathered from the fact of these epistles being addressed to one minister, and

not to all, in their respective churches; which cannot be accounted for on the supposition of a ministerial equality. One alone would not surely have been addressed, and called **THE** angel of the church, if he had not possessed some influence and authority above the rest. The title itself conveys the notion of high office and dignity; for it is given to our Saviour, who is called "the angel of the covenant," Mal. iii. 1; and to the apostles, as appears from comparing Revel. xxi. 12, 14; and, as the term signifies a *messenger* of God, it is very appropriate to those who succeeded the apostles in the office of guiding and governing the church of Christ.

In ascribing a distinction of rank, and a superiority to these angels of the churches, we are warranted by some particulars in the epistles themselves. In the Church of Ephesus there were many congregations and elders¹; yet to the angel of it the Saviour says: "Thou canst not bear with them that are evil; and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars," ch. ii. 2. Now *trial* implies authority to judge and decide; and *not bearing with* implies a right to repudiate and reject; consequently the person designated by the term "angel," was invested with an authoritative superintendency over the ministers who vaunted themselves to be apostles, *i. e.* eminent

¹ Part II. ch. i. § iv. 5.

teachers, and our Lord approves of his conduct in the exercise of it. Again, to the angel of the Church of Pergamos he writes, "I know thou holdest fast my name—but I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam.—So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate," ch. ii. 12—15. The charge of "having," or suffering, the persons who held these false doctrines, implies full power and authority to correct these disorders, and this angel is blamed for not exercising it. To the angel of the Church of Thyatira also he writes, "I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants," &c. ch. ii. 18—20. Here the angel must have possessed supreme authority over the ministers, or he could not have been justly censured for suffering those to teach who propagated pernicious doctrines. To the angel of the Church of Sardis he says, "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die," ch. iii. 2. which, whether it refers to persons or things, is appropriate to the episcopal office.

On these grounds, it is without hesitation concluded that the apocalyptic angels of the seven Asiatic churches were single ministers, invested with full sacerdotal powers. They are addressed as responsible for their respective churches : while

some are severely rebuked for not repelling and excommunicating those who held false and pernicious doctrines, others are commended for exerting their authority with zeal and faithfulness. It is not easy to conceive how words can convey a clearer ascription of episcopal jurisdiction. Nor will the conclusion be different, provided we take, with some writers on this mysterious book, the seven epistles in a mystical sense, as a symbolical description of the seven different stages of the Christian church, to the end of time¹. It must be the actual state of the Asiatic church at that time which is taken to adumbrate some future ecclesiastical condition, and that actual and existing state exhibits a presidentship and controlling power given to one presbyter over others in each of the seven churches, and this with the approbation of our Lord, which is real and substantive episcopacy.

12. The last argument for the apostolical institution of episcopacy is derived from the universal practice of primitive antiquity. It falls not within the province of this work to enter into a formal proof, that the Christian churches, after the death of the apostles, were formed on the episcopal model; but it has been demonstrated by many learned divines, that in the age immediately succeeding the apostolic, where-

¹ Bengel, Gnomon, in loc. Poli. Synop. in loc. More, Mede, and Bransby Cooper, on the Revelations.

ever the religion of Christ was propagated, bishops were distinct from and superior to presbyters. No church existed from the earliest times without a bishop for its president and governor. Admitting this fact, it proves incontestibly the apostolic origin of Diocesan episcopacy. Can it for a moment be conceived that such an arrangement would have been universally adopted if episcopacy had not been of divine appointment? Would so many pious and devoted men, who renounced all the distinctions of the world, who placed all their hopes in the doctrine of the cross, and who cheerfully submitted to martyrdom in defence of their faith, have been guilty of so great a crime as to violate the discipline established by Christ and the Apostles? There could on this point be no room for ignorance; none for mistake; the immediate successors of the Apostles must have been well acquainted with their practice and principles in regard to it; for it was a matter not depending upon acuteness of reasoning or lengthened investigations, but upon personal knowledge; not a point of doctrine, but a matter of fact, perfectly level to all capacities, and on which error was impossible.

As these venerable persons must have well known the apostolic institutions on the subject of church government, so must they have had every motive to retain them. They had no partialities to serve, no prejudices to blind them,

no inducements to depart from the order established by the inspired teachers of Christianity. Their fervent piety and exalted integrity assure us that they would not be guilty of so great wickedness; nor, if this were possible, could they have succeeded in setting up a different form of ecclesiastical government. Universality of power and jurisdiction died with the apostles. Their successors in the ministry were fixed to their own charges; they had no power to interfere in each other's districts; they were moreover separated in distant countries, having no bond of union, and but little intercourse: and that, too, often interrupted by national hostility. Under these circumstances, it is utterly impossible, if the Apostles had founded the church on a parity, that all the early believers could have been persuaded to abandon it, and to adopt a widely different form of ecclesiastical policy. When, therefore, the very next succeeding ministers of the Gospel not only testify with one voice that episcopacy was instituted by the inspired disciples of our Lord, but also themselves established it in all the churches of which they were the distinguished ornaments; and when we find it uniformly and universally prevalent, without any exception, without any opposition, it must assuredly have had its source in apostolic authority.

IV. Such is the evidence for the Divine appointment of a threefold ministry, evidence so

clear and full as irresistibly to compel conviction ; but was it also intended to be transmissive ? Some things ordained by the Apostles were only of a local and temporary nature : as, for example, the order of deaconesses, the decree to abstain from blood, the kiss of charity ; and mention is made of certain rites and customs established by the Apostles in the churches, 1 Cor. xi. 2, 16 ; 2 Thess. ii. 15, which in the next ages ceased to be observed ; it may, therefore, be surmised that the episcopal function, though originally instituted by apostolic authority, was merely a temporary appointment. All doubt, however, on this point will be removed by the following testimonies, which show that the ministry in its triple order was designed to be perpetuated by regular succession to the end of time.

1. This may be inferred from the Divine institution of the sacerdotal authority, of which the most satisfactory evidence has been produced. Some things, indeed, were ordained by the Apostles which, as they originated in the peculiar condition of the nascent church, were designed to be temporary ; but these evidently appear by their nature and character to be only temporary institutions, appointed rather as matters of prudential adaptation to local circumstances than of perpetual obligation. They cannot at least be proved to have the sanction of any express precept from God. Very different

is the case of episcopacy, which has been proved to have had its source in divine and apostolical authority. A mode of ecclesiastical government enjoined by men divinely commissioned to regulate the church must be for ever binding, unless it be abrogated by an authority equal to that by which it was at first enacted. The holy sacraments might with as much reason be abolished, as any change made, without some clear intimation of God's will, in the order of church officers, instituted by Christ and the Apostles in the church.

2. That it was designed, in its general features, for perpetuity, is attested in the commission which Christ gave to the Apostles. In the third sub-section of the preceding section, it has been shown that the terms in which it is expressed, and especially the accompanying promise, "Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world," are an investment of episcopal authority with the power of delegation, so long as the world shall endure.

3. The eleven apostles understood a succession of officers invested with apostolic jurisdiction, to be implied in their commission; else why proceed to the election of another in the room of Judas, if it had been personal to themselves? The transaction shows in the clearest manner that in their belief, and they could not be mistaken, it was their divine Master's intention to continue an office in all its essential part

of sacerdotal power like to that of the Apostles, after their decease¹.

4. The perpetuity of the Christian church is declared in our Saviour's promise, that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it," Matt. xvi. 18, and in other passages, Luke i. 33; 1 Cor. xv. 24, 25. In this continuance of the church, there must of necessity be a continuance of the ministrations, and of the divine power and authority which are essential to it as a Christian society. The mode, according to Christ's original institution, of transmitting these ministrations and this power is, as has been above shown, by a three-fold ministry, which consequently must be continued as long as the church shall exist.

5. This is also manifest from the nature and constitution of the church; for as it is a regular society to be continued by a succession of believers to the end of the world, it must have an uninterrupted succession of officers to guide and govern it. So long as the society shall exist, the Gospel must be preached and the sacraments administered; and, if this is perpetually necessary, the office of the ministry to dispense these ordinances is perpetually necessary. So long also as the society shall exist, order and discipline must be maintained; and consequently, so much of the apostolical power as is requisite for

¹ See § iii. 4. of this chapter.

this purpose must descend to those who from time to time succeed in the apostles' room. But that church government only is of divine institution which Christ committed to the apostles; and therefore the apostolical jurisdiction, as far as it is transferable, must be perpetual.

6. In Timothy and Titus we find unexceptionable instances of the delegation of the episcopal office by the immediate ambassadors of Christ to uninspired persons; and it cannot be conceived that such an example would have been set, at a time when the guidance of inspiration precluded the possibility of error, if it had not been designed for a continuous arrangement. In the office with which they were intrusted there is no indication of a temporary nature; it belongs to the ordinary condition of the church; its duties are perpetually necessary; all which afford good grounds for concluding that it was meant to be permanent. So far from giving the remotest hint of any contemplated change, the apostle prescribes rules which they were to observe in the choice of ministers, in exercising discipline over them, and in regulating the affairs of the churches, which would be both insignificant and absurd, if their office had been shortly to cease. From directions of this kind, as well as from the appointment itself, it may justly be presumed that this example of church government was designed by the Spirit to be a model for all after ages.

7. That the episcopal power intrusted to Timothy and Titus was intended to be transmissive, is clear from some express declarations of the apostle. To the former he writes; "The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also," 2 Tim. ii. 2; which is an injunction to Timothy to commit to others what had been committed to himself; and therefore that there was to be a succession of men vested with ecclesiastical authority like his own to teach, and to command others to observe, "the things that he had heard among many witnesses."

8. Writing to Timothy the apostle says, "I give thee charge in the sight of God—that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ," 1 Tim. vi. 13, 14. Hence, as Bishop Overall observes, "it was impossible for Timothy to observe those things till the coming of Christ, he being to die long before; and therefore the precepts and rules which St. Paul had given unto him, to observe in his episcopal government, did equally appertain as well to bishops his successors, as to himself, and were to be executed by them successively after his death unto the world's end, as carefully and diligently as he himself, whilst he lived, had put them in practice¹." The charge was to be kept

¹ Convocation Book, p. 180.

“until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ” at the day of judgment; but, as the apostle knew that Timothy would not live till that day, the charge must have been intended to apply to Timothy’s successors, who might bear the same office to the end of time.

9. St. Paul, after charging Timothy to preach the Word, and to make full proof of his ministry, adds this reason, “For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand,” 2 Tim. iv. 6; which plainly intimates that the government of the Ephesian Church would ere long devolve permanently on Timothy, who was therefore to exercise such authority, and to take such order for its transmission, as the apostle had done before. It implies that Timothy was to succeed not only to the government of the church, but to the same power of delegating it which St. Paul himself possessed.

On a dispassionate review of what has been advanced, it is impossible to come to any other conclusion than that an imparity consisting of three gradations in the ministry, analogous to those which are ecclesiastically called bishops, priests, and deacons, was a divine institution; and that this institution was designed to be perpetuated by a continual succession in the Christian church. To this conclusion additional strength will be given by a consideration of their distinctive and appropriate duties; to which, therefore, our attention must now be directed.

V. A distinction of officers necessarily infers a distinction of offices ; and, as office implies power, where there are distinct offices there must be distinct powers. In respect to their spiritual character, there are duties which, being inherent to the pastoral office, may be performed by all ministers in common ; and in respect to the second order, that of presbyters, little difference of opinion exists among the various denominations of Christian societies. It will, therefore, only be necessary to state briefly those which are appropriate and peculiar to bishops and deacons. Those belonging to the former are government, confirmation, and ordination.

1. That to the office of the highest order of church ministers belongs the control and superintendency over the other orders of ministers, and over the general affairs of the church, is included in the nature and notion of episcopacy ; and of course the arguments which prove its divine and apostolical origin go equally to prove that bishops are invested with this power and presidency ; so that further illustration on this head would be superfluous.

2. Confirmation, the next office peculiar to bishops, has always been reckoned by the church, from the earliest ages, as a sacred and apostolical institution, and it is founded upon the express authority of Scripture. When Philip, the deacon and evangelist, had converted and baptized the Samaritans, "the apostles

which were at Jerusalem sent unto them Peter and John, who, when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost; for as yet he was fallen upon none of them, only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost," Acts viii. 14—17. Again, after the disciples of Ephesus had been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Paul "laid his hands upon them, and the Holy Ghost came on them," ch. xix. 1—6. From these passages we learn two things; *first*, that even in the apostles' times a new solemnity and ministration besides baptism was required; otherwise Peter and John would not have been sent from Jerusalem to impose hands on the baptized converts at Samaria, nor would Paul have laid his hands on those at Ephesus; and, *secondly*, that this office was strictly appropriated to the apostles. Ananias, it is true, who was not an apostle, put his hands on St. Paul; but this was by the special command of Christ, Acts ix. 17. In ordinary cases, however, it was a rite, as these examples prove, to be administered only by men of the apostolic order.

The ceremony performed by the apostles was confessedly in part for the conveyance of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, which were temporary, and have long since ceased; but the function itself may be designed for perpetuity.

The preaching of the apostles was attended by extraordinary conversions of the people, yet the office is not now to cease, because it is no longer attended with miraculous effects. But the limitation "in part" is above added, because it is unreasonable to suppose that it was wholly for the communication of extraordinary gifts. It cannot be imagined that the apostles would send two of their own body to bestow promiscuously upon the whole multitude of Samaritan converts the power of working miracles. The ceremony must surely have been intended partly for the conveyance of ordinary grace; and assuredly, notwithstanding a miraculous efficacy at the first institution of a rite, it may have something in it fitted for ordinary and perpetual use.

That it was not to expire with the apostles appears also from the promise of the Spirit being extended "to as many as the Lord shall call," Acts ii. 39. The fulfilment of this promise must be either by an extraordinary way, or by an ordinary ministry. Not certainly by the former, for the gift of miracles has long ceased. It must consequently be by the second; and hence there must always be an ordinary office with apostolic power in the church, by whose instrumentality the promised grace of the Spirit is to be communicated; and if so, the mode of communicating it will hardly be denied to be by that imposition of hands which the apostles used for the conveyance of the Holy Ghost. That it

was not a temporary institution is also manifested by its being placed among the essential principles of Christianity: "Leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment," Heb. vi. 1, 2. Imposition of hands is here reckoned one of the first principles and fundamental doctrines of Christ's religion; for it is ranked among such primary truths as the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment; and its being placed immediately after baptism shows that the apostle is speaking of the laying on of hands in confirmation, which constantly followed baptism.

Confirmation, then, so far from being a temporary rite, is to be administered by the successors of the apostles to the end of the world. The design of it, as the preceding observations evince, is to be the means of conferring grace by the prayers and imposition of the bishop's hands upon those who have already by baptism been made members of Christ. It is the ordinary channel by which grace and ability are derived to act according to our baptismal professions and engagements. It cannot without the guilt of incredulity be denied, that it is the established order of God's providential government of mankind to confer his spiritual blessings through

human agency. By imposition of hands St. Peter and John conferred the Holy Ghost upon the Samaritan converts, and so did St. Paul on those of Ephesus, and likewise spiritual graces on Timothy, to whom he gives this command, "that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind," 2 Tim. i. 6, 7. Whether this refers to ordination or confirmation, the graces were conveyed by the imposition of the apostle's hands : and "the spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind," are ordinary graces alike necessary in all ages. That which affects the heart by an invisible influence can alone come from the Almighty, and can only be effectual at his will ; but in all his operations he uses certain instruments to effect his purposes ; and he has instituted a separate and distinct function of men, by whose ministry he ordinarily conveys and confirms the promised blessings of the Gospel. Unless, therefore, we reject all human agency in dispensing his favours, we are bound to believe that a spiritual grace and blessing is conveyed by the prayers, the benediction, and imposition of episcopal hands in the office of confirmation.

Some, notwithstanding, "consider confirmation as nothing more than a solemn manner of persons taking upon themselves their baptismal vow ; and, as such, it is a ceremony of high

importance, calculated to impress youthful minds with a just sense of the great obligations of the Christian profession, and to excite in them an earnest endeavour, "faithfully to observe such things as they, by their own confession, have assented unto¹." In this account the principal design of confirmation—to be a means of grace—is overlooked; and imposition of hands is rendered altogether insignificant, though we never read of its being used except for the purpose of conferring something. To confirmation, moreover, is assigned an object differing little from that which is effected whenever an open profession of faith is made in public worship. Again, another prelate, verging from the boundary line in an opposite direction, represents confirmation as "a covenant," as on the part of the recipients "entering into an intelligent covenant with their God and Saviour;" a great and dangerous error; making by necessary consequence the sacrament of baptism, a decent indeed, but inefficacious ordinance without a further ratification; and, by ascribing to confirmation the nature of a covenant, elevates it to the rank of a sacrament. In none of the scriptural texts where it is mentioned is there the least intimation of any stipulation, any covenanting engagement required in those upon whom hands were imposed.

¹ Bp. Tomline, *Elem. of Ch. Theol.* in Art. xxv.

The scriptural view of confirmation is that of a benedictory rite, appointed to be a means of grace ; and, if it be urged against it as exalting confirmation to a sacramental privilege, the same may be said of other sacred ministrations. Preaching is a means of grace, for it will be ineffectual for the conversion of the hearers, except it come to them not “in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost,” 1 Thess. i. 5 ; prayer also is a means of grace, for “the Father giveth the Holy Spirit to them that ask him,” Luke xi. 13 ; but are prayer and preaching for these reasons to be accounted sacraments ? Was the imposition of the apostles’ hands, by which the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit were communicated, a sacrament ? Is ordination, by which men are commissioned to be the ambassadors of Christ, and have grace and ability given them to fulfil the office, a sacrament ? It is a rite which renders them “all ministers of the New Testament,” 2 Cor. iii. 6 ; and may, on that account, be called a sacrament with as much propriety as confirmation can, because it is the instrument of communicating to the faithful the ordinary grace of the Spirit. It is useless to dispute about words ; some of the ancient fathers called it a sacrament ; though it is not, nor did they take it to be one, in the same way that baptism and the Lord’s supper are—the outward and visible sign of an inward

and spiritual grace, ordained by Christ himself not only to be the means, but also A PLEDGE, a warrant and surety by covenant and promise, for the communication of a special grace.

The age proper for receiving it is not stated by the sacred writers. Our Saviour took little children up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them, Matt. xix. 13; Mark x. 13; and in the instances above cited the apostles must have confirmed persons of all ages among the Samaritan and Ephesian converts. This, therefore, is a matter left to be decided by the authority of the church. In the primitive times infants, as well as adults, were confirmed by imposition of hands, as Bingham and others have largely shown; and our own church has determined that young persons are of a suitable age to be brought to the bishop to be confirmed by him when they can say the creed, the Lord's prayer, and the ten commandments, and answer the other questions in the short Catechism, and are willing and ready to confirm their baptismal vows. It follows from the view above taken of confirmation as a means of grace, that at the earliest age "after infancy, but yet before they understand too much of sin, and when they can competently understand the fundamentals of religion, then it is good to bring them to be confirmed, that the spirit of God may prevent their youthful sins, and Christ by his word and by his

spirit may enter and take possession at the same time¹." So much for confirmation.

3. Another privilege peculiar to the episcopal order is the power of ordaining ministers. By ordination is meant a formal call and commission to the work of the ministry, a solemn delegation to an ecclesiastical function; or, as Dr. Johnson defines it, "the act of investing any man with sacerdotal power." For a full comprehension of the subject, it will be requisite to investigate its necessity—the persons to whom the right belongs—and the manner of performing it. Commencing with the first in order, the evidence shall now be stated for believing ordination to be necessary.

1. Under the Mosaic dispensation, a solemn designation was always required in order to the public administration of sacred things. Aaron was separated and consecrated by Moses to burn incense before the Lord, and to minister unto Him, Exod xxix, 35; 1 Chron. xxiii. 13. Every high priest, says the Apostle, is taken from men, and ordained for men, Heb. v. 1, et seq. The peculiar manner of this particular designation of the high priest, the priests, and Levites, is described in Exod. xxviii. xxix. and Numbers viii. Joshua was delegated by Moses, at the command of God, to be the successor in his office, Numb. xxvii. 18—23. The prophets

¹ Bp. Jer. Taylor, Disc. on Confirmation, § vii.

had no authority to teach till they had received their particular orders and commission, as is expressly recorded of Isaiah, vi. 8, and Jeremiah i. 7. The charge against false teachers is, "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran," Jer. xxiii. 21. Uzzah, because he touched the ark without a command, was struck dead, 2 Sam. vi. 6, et seq. Uziah, for having invaded the office of the priests, was smitten with leprosy, and degraded from his throne, 2 Chron. xxvi. 16. It is manifest, from the Old Testament, that no one could officiate in holy things without both a mission, and a solemn delegation to the office; and it cannot be supposed that any are permitted to minister under the Gospel, without an equally solemn delegation.

2. Christ being the Head and Supreme Governor in His spiritual kingdom, no individual member, no class of persons, can have any authority in it, except what is derived from him; no man, therefore, has a right to exercise the ministerial office without a call and commission from the sovereign Head of the church. He can have no claim to deliver a message from God, until he has been empowered and sent by Him in whose name he comes; for it belongs to every sovereign to appoint his ministers. The Christian society is represented as a house-

¹ See p. 2, ch. ii. § 1.

hold, Matt. x. 25 ; Luke xii. 42 ; but the servants are appointed by the master of the house, who assigns to each his proper office. It is the Lord's vineyard, or harvest, Matt. xx. 1. et seq. ; —xxi. 33. et seq. ; but it belongs to the Lord of the vineyard to send labourers into the harvest. In all these cases Christ is our Master, and all we are brethren, Matt. xxiii. 8 ; and therefore it is the Master only who can give authority to any one over his brethren and fellow-servants.

3. The titles given to Christian ministers imply the necessity of a divine commission. They are called ambassadors, 2 Cor. v. 20 ; Ephes. vi. 20 ; and therefore must be sent by the Prince in whose name and authority they present themselves. They are represented as stewards, Luke xii. 35 ; 1 Cor. iv. 1 ; Tit. i. 7 ; and must therefore be chosen not by the servants, but by the Master, who alone has the right to make them rulers over his household. They are styled shepherds, John x. 1. et seq. ; Ephes. iv. 11 ; 1 Pet. v. 2, 4 ; and so must be appointed by Christ, the great Shepherd of our souls ; for, if they enter not into fold by Christ, the door, they are thieves and robbers. They are called soldiers, 1 Tim. i. 18 ; 2 Tim. ii. 3, 4 ; Heb. ii. 10 ; and therefore it is the Captain of our salvation who must give them a commission to carry on the warfare. They are denominated workmen, 1 Cor. iii. 9 ; ix. 11 : 2 Tim. ii. 15 ;

and must therefore be engaged by the supreme Lord, and sent by him to his husbandry or building, rightly to divide the Word of God, and to sow the genuine seed of truth. From these several titles it is evident that Christian ministers are divinely called and commissioned, without which they could not be the messengers of God.

4. God sent his Son into the world to erect a spiritual kingdom; and, as the Father sent him, so he sent his immediate disciples to announce the blessings, and to promulgate the laws of that dispensation. Their authority to teach, and to govern the church, was derived from their commission, which implies a power of delegation¹. It is clear, therefore, beyond all controversy that they were the sole depositories of their Master's authority, and that they are the only channel for its transmission to others. The right to any spiritual office must descend from that source; and no man has since been, or ever can be duly authorized to exercise its functions without this warrant and commission from the apostles, the delegation of which is ordination, which therefore is indispensable.

5. Infallible authority assures us that the various orders of ministers in the church are appointed by its Divine Founder; and consequently none can claim to be enrolled among

¹ See § iv. 2. of this chapter.

the number, unless they have received their credentials from him. As an inward and supernatural call is not now to be expected, these credentials can only be communicated through human intervention; which is the act of ordination, and therefore necessary to constitute a Christian minister.

6. St. Paul writes to the Romans, "How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent?" ch. x. 14, 15. As no man can rightly call upon him in whom he does not believe, or believe in him of whom he has not heard, or hear without a preacher, so no man can preach except he be sent. The last link in the gradation is as necessary as the others; and it is here declared to be as impossible to preach the Gospel without being sent, as it is to believe what has not been heard of, or to hear what has not been proclaimed. It is not said that a man cannot preach except he be *gifted*, except he possess requisite qualifications and attainments; but except he be *sent*; and that this is spoken of an ordinary and ministerial sending, not of any thing extraordinary and providential, is apparent from the context. As hearing, preaching, and believing are of an ordinary nature, so must be the last step in the argument, the sending. The apostle asserts the

necessity of a ministerial mission to be as great as the necessity of preaching, hearing, and believing. Now mission implies ordination, without which none of course can lawfully take upon themselves the office of a minister.

7. Again, "no man taketh this honour upon himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself, to be made an high priest, but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee," Heb. v. 4, 5. The drift of the apostle's argument shows that by "this honour" is meant the honour of being an officer in God's church; and the proposition is, that no man ought to take this ministerial honour upon him unless called and commissioned of God, as was Aaron, who undertook not the office till he was called to it, Exod. xxviii. 1. This is further illustrated by the example of Christ, who glorified not himself to be made an high priest, till he was sealed and inaugurated by the Father into this great office, Matt. iii. 16, 17; Luke iv. 18; comp. John viii. 54. The conclusion is obvious, that no man can lawfully take the priestly honour upon himself, without being called of God, and ordained thereto.

8. No example occurs in the sacred writings of a person ministering in holy things without being regularly called and sent. Christ did not enter upon his ministry till he was inaugurated into it by the Father; nor did the apostles till

they were solemnly called and set apart to their office, Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark iii. 14; vi. 7; xvi. 15. Both they and the seventy were sent forth with the declaration that those who received them received him, and those who despised them despised him, Matt. x. 40; Luke x. 16. St. Paul often insists upon his mission from Christ, Rom. i. 1; 1 Cor. i. 1; ix. 1; Gal. i. 15, 16. Presbyters before they presumed to exercise their functions, were ordained by the apostles, Acts xiv. 23; and deacons, who were of the lowest rank, were approved and authorized by persons having apostolic authority, Acts vi. 1. et seq.; 1 Tim. iii. 10. In short, in the first planting of Christianity, no qualifications whatever were sufficient to authorize the exercise of any sacred function without a due call and commission.

9. The nature of the ministerial office implies a delegation from those whose commission was originally received from God. It is a spiritual function, and not only the authority, but the ability and graces requisite for its effectual discharge are the gift of the Spirit. Thus, the apostle exhorts the elders to "take heed unto the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers," Acts xx. 28; not surely by a miraculous call, but by the imposition of the apostles' hands. The qualifications by which men are enabled to exercise it beneficially are ascribed to the Holy Spirit, 1 Cor. xii. 1, et

seq.; Ephes. iv. 7—13; but a miraculous appointment is not now vouchsafed; men are not now called immediately by the Holy Ghost; and the ordinary way of receiving its gifts and graces is through the medium of human hands. In no other way can we rationally expect the gifts and qualifications for the ministry; and by comparing 1 Tim. iv. 14. with 2 Tim. i. 6, we find a certain “gift,” be it what it may, expressly connected with the laying on of hands in his ordination. From all which we cannot but infer that men have not only the power and authority, but are made capable of executing the sacred function by being consecrated to it by those whose right to ordain was derived by successive appointments from our Lord¹.

There is, indeed, antecedently to this *outer* one an *inward call*, which consists in being inclined by the Holy Ghost to undertake the office of the ministry. “No one can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost,” 1 Cor. xii. 3, from whom the ordinary graces, and all good

¹ The Church of England service for the ordering of priests is to the same effect; for the bishop says, “Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a priest;” meaning his gifts and graces, and the ability to fit the candidate for the office, which are conferred by ordination when rightly administered. In the above defence of the necessity of ordination, the instance of Barnabas and Saul, as related Acts xiii. 3, 4, upon which many writers lay great stress, is here omitted; because of the uncertainty whether the transaction was a real ordination, as observed in a subsequent page.

dispositions and resolutions proceed, and by whom they are confirmed, Gal. v. 22; Phil. ii. 13; James i. 17. To the same Spirit must be attributed a sincere dedication to the work of the ministry; and the evidence of this sacred influence upon the heart is, that the office is sought, not with a view to ease, to wealth, to honour, nor for the sake of any worldly advantage or aggrandizement, but with a real intent to fulfil all its holy requirements, and a fervent desire to be useful in the Lord's vineyard, by promoting the glory of God, and the edification of his people. This is that inward call to which the Church of England adverts when she requires from the candidates that they "trust," viz. are on good grounds persuaded, that they "are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon them this office." But there must also be an outward call and commission by those who have power given them to admit qualified persons into the sacred function.

Hence not every one who may possess abilities and attainments has a right to discharge the office of the ministry; he must have a mission likewise, for, as it is a divine ordinance, those only can lawfully assume it who are duly called and sent, who have a commission from the Head of the church, the conferring which is ordination. The necessity of it being fully established, it is now to be inquired what persons God has intrusted with authority to ordain

ministers for sacred services. It has been variously maintained, *first*, that the call must come from the Holy Ghost immediately; and therefore that any man, feeling this inward call, is competent to assume the office; *secondly*, that the people forming a single congregation may confer it by election; *thirdly*, that presbyters have power to ordain; and, *fourthly*, that this power belongs exclusively to bishops in the proper sense of the word. The first is the doctrine of the Fanatics; the second, of the Independents; the third, of the Presbyterians; and the fourth, of the Episcopalians. It will be proper, therefore, to examine the grounds upon which they build their respective opinions.

Those who hold the *first* opinion assert that any believer is competent to act as an ordinary minister, according as convenience may require, provided only he be endowed with the necessary gifts, these gifts constituting his commission. Appeal is made to several texts which, as is supposed, imply that the offices of preaching and baptizing were not unfrequently performed by laymen in the first age of Christianity. These have come under our review in p. 188, where it was shown that they relate to matters foreign from the purpose for which they are cited. Not one of them affords a proof of the ministerial office having ever been exercised by the laity, while some of them lead to a directly contrary inference. But it were a waste of

time to enter into a lengthened examination, since some kind of outward ordination has been established above by the most unquestionable evidence.

It is likewise urged that St. Peter represents true Christians as "a spiritual house," "an holy priesthood," "a royal priesthood," "an holy nation," 1 Pet. ii. 5, 9; and that St John represents them as "made kings and priests unto God," Revel. i. 6. The meaning however is, that the people of God are priests not ministerially, but spiritually, because they can offer up spiritual sacrifices unto God. Thus it is expounded by the apostle, who adds that they are appointed "to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." They offer these instead of material sacrifices, and are therefore "a royal priesthood" in a higher sense than the Israelites were called "a kingdom of priests," Exod. xix. 6¹. They may be said in a figurative sense to be made priests to God, because they offer prayer, thanksgiving, and alms-deeds to him, which are called sacrifices in Scripture; but in the literal sense they are no more made ministers than they are made kings.

Private Christians may instruct and admonish each other in private conversation, and may use such exhortation as may provoke one another to piety and good works. Nay, it is the duty of all,

¹ See Christian Expositor in 1 Pet. ii. 5.

especially of those whom God has raised to influential stations to endeavour, both by word and deed, to engage others to the practice of religion. But they have no scriptural right to go farther; and, whether we consider the divine institution of the ministry, or the indispensable obligation of an authorized designation to it, no man can lawfully assume the office of a Christian teacher, merely because he believes himself inwardly moved to it, or because he has attained a competent knowledge of the Scriptures, and deems himself in other respects well qualified for the office.

The abettors of the *second* opinion claim a sacred and indefeasible right to the election of their own ministers. Every man, say they, has as good a right to choose his own pastor, to whom to commit the care of his soul, as to choose his physician and lawyer, with whom he intrusts his body or estate. Now in this allegation, and in all their declamations on the subject, there is an obscurity and confusion arising from not accurately distinguishing between the ordination of ministers, and the designation of them to particular districts. These are things wholly different; the one gives a commission to the ministry, the other assigns a place where the minister may exercise his functions; for it is manifest a man may be ordained without having any locality where he can lawfully perform any public ministrations. If nothing more be in-

tended than that ministers should be chosen to their respective districts by popular election, it will be sufficient to refer to the observations in P. i. ch. iv. 4. Or, if it be intended only that all have a right to choose the denomination of Christians to which they attach themselves, or the particular church which they attend, the writer of this work at least will offer no opposition; for in his judgment the law of Christian liberty accords these privileges to every man. But they moreover claim for the people a right of election to the ministerial office; or, as the Dissenters love to speak, that a regular call to the ministry is to be by the election and approval of the congregation, which they denominate a "church." This is the real point at issue; to which, therefore, we must now address ourselves.

It may be well to premise that this pretended right of the people by no means precludes some kind of ordination by fellow-ministers. Dissenters commonly use some rites and ceremonies on the admission of persons to the pastoral office; and it is generally held among them to be the proper province of the bishops, presbyters, or elders, to ordain; that is, formally to appoint and set apart to the orderly exercise of any office in the church. Ordination, however, is not considered by them as necessary; "but they think it is very decent and useful, and agreeable to the Scripture model, when they are

about to settle with any people as pastors, to have the approbation, the prayers, and the advice of some of their brethren, who pretend to no authority to constitute them pastors; that being derived solely from Christ, and the choice of the people¹." The real question, then, is, whether the people are warranted by Holy Writ in assuming to themselves the power of calling persons to the ministry, or, in other words, of choosing and electing them to the ministerial office.

1. The right of such election by the people is founded on certain precepts, as "Take heed how ye hear," Luke viii. 18. "Beware of false prophets," Matt. vii. 15. "Mark them which cause divisions and offences, and avoid them," Rom. xvi. 17. "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits," 1 John iv. 1. These, and other like texts, are general admonitions to guard against the seducements of corrupt and heretical teachers; but as to the particular mode of appointment to the ministry, they have no connection whatever; and nothing can be more irrelevant than to adduce them in confirmation of parochial or congregational elections.

2. After the ascension of our Lord, the people, it is alleged, chose the two disciples to be presented to him to fill the vacancy in the

¹ Palmer, Prot. Catechism, p. 30. Turner of Abingdon, Compend. ch. iii.

apostolic college, Acts i. 15, et seq.; from which it is inferred that even the election of an apostle was determined by the votes of the people. Whether the words, "they appointed two," v. 23, refer to the Apostles, or to the believers at large, is not quite clear; taking them, however, in the latter application, the transaction forms no precedent for popular election. "The number of the names together were about one hundred and twenty," v. 15; and if we deduct the eleven apostles, and the seventy disciples, the number of laymen amounted only to about one third; the election, therefore, was virtually in the power of the ministers. Besides, the choice was not of a stated pastor over them, but of a person to fill the Apostolate, an office which engaged him to become the spiritual teacher of other nations and people. Hence, if the election was made by these believing Jews, it was so, not for themselves, but for others; not an election of their own pastor, but of a guide and governor of other churches, which, if it be at all a precedent, forms one against the people's right to elect their own minister.

Again, if any election, properly so called, took place, it was most probably by the Apostles, for to them was St. Peter's address directed, as appears, *first* from the expressions, "men *and* brethren," v. 16; which, as the word "and" is not in the Greek text, is more correctly ren-

dered, "ye men who are my brethren:" certainly a designation of the Apostles: and *secondly*, from the phrase, "of these men which have accompanied with us," &c., v. 21, which cannot possibly refer to the persons whom he was addressing, but to the others assembled, one of whom he declared ought to be ordained to be a witness of Christ's resurrection. The persons addressed by St. Peter, therefore, were the other Apostles, who, in consequence, appointed two," &c. v. 23.

But after all, it was not, in any correct sense of the term, an election either by the Apostles, or by the whole multitude, for the decision was left to God. "They prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen," v. 24. The object of the whole proceeding was to leave the selection of a person to fill the vacant apostleship to the Lord; for no one could be appointed who was not qualified "to be a witness with them of His resurrection," and no one could decide this but the Lord, "which knew the hearts of all men:" in order therefore to ascertain his decision, "they gave forth their lots, and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven Apostles," v. 26.

Upon this last expression rests the chief reason for supposing an election in this case. The word *συγκατεψηφίσθη*, here rendered, "he was numbered," denotes, in its primary signi-

fication, *to choose by common suffrages*; from which it is inferred that votes were taken on this occasion. Yet, if it were possible to take the word here in its primary sense of election, it would refer, as is plain from the context, to God's choice of Matthias, by disposing the lot to fall upon him. But that it means *to count with, to number with*, in the place before us, is agreed by the best lexicographers and commentators, and is evident upon the slightest examination; for if it be rendered, "he was chosen by suffrages, together with (*μετὰ*) the eleven Apostles," it would lead to the absurd inference, that the people elected the eleven, as well as Matthias, into the apostolic college. So far, then, from any popular election having taken place, the whole matter is referred to, and determined by, the decision of the Almighty.

3. The seven deacons mentioned in the sixth chapter of the Acts are instanced as having been elected by the laity. But, waiving the doubt whether their office was merely secular, to "serve tables," which will be examined in the sixth section of this chapter, the part which the people took in the transaction was extremely limited. The Apostles said to them, "Look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost, and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business," v. 3. The Apostles determined that the diaconate should be instituted; they fixed the number of the officers,

and the qualifications required from them: and they alone bestowed the ecclesiastical authority, whatever was its nature, secular or spiritual. All that the people did was to recommend such persons as they knew possessed the requisite qualifications; but recommendation and ordination are quite different things.

4. The church which was at Jerusalem, we are told, "sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch," &c., Acts xi. 22, 23. But why may we not understand that by the church is intended its spiritual rulers and governors, for such a mode of speaking is not unusual¹? Certainly it cannot be proved that the laity are only meant, exclusive of the clergy; but if they are, their act conferred no new authority upon him, gave him no fresh power, no commission to preach. This he enjoyed before: and his being sent by the church for a particular business, made him neither more nor less a minister than he was before: it only gave him an opportunity of exercising an office, which he possessed already, in a new place. In no point of view can it be regarded as an instance of lay-ordination. Besides, if Barnabas received his mission from the laity, it proves too much for the Dissenting cause, since it will prove that a congregation have not only a right to choose and appoint their own ministers, but

¹ See P. ii. ch. ii. p. 183.

likewise to elect and send ministers to other congregations.

5. Paul and Barnabas, in their second visit to Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, and Antioch in Pisidia, "ordained them elders in every church," Acts xiv. 23, where it is said the word *χειροτονεῖν*, rendered by the word *to ordain*, literally signifies to choose by lifting up the hands, and therefore that the elders were appointed, not by the Apostles, but by the people, who voted by holding up their hands. This might be the primary meaning of the verb, but it unquestionably denotes also any sort of appointment to an office; and in whatever sense it be here received, the only grammatical, the only rational construction of the passage is, that none but Paul and Barnabas ordained or elected. By them exclusively, and not by the people, the elders were chosen, ordained, and instituted in every church in those regions.

6. The people, it is alleged, appointed companions and assistants to St. Paul in his travels, whom he calls the "apostles" of the churches, and "the glory of Christ," 2 Cor. viii. 23. St. Paul, however, was, on the occasion adverted to in this chapter of his epistle, as much appointed by the people as his companions, who, therefore, received no ministerial privilege from the people any more than St. Paul did. Their being sent about a business of charity cannot be considered an ordination. Diverse churches sent alms by

diverse persons; but this is so evidently foreign from an appointment to an ecclesiastical office, that nothing further need be said in refutation.

Such and so irrelevant are the precedents appealed to for lay-ordination. It is acknowledged by Dissenters themselves that "no case occurs in the inspired history where it is mentioned that a church elected its pastor, no one instance of a mere popular ordination¹." It would be strange indeed, if there did; for how can a power be derived from the people, which the people do not possess themselves? All subordinate authority must be derived from Christ, the Head of the church, either immediately, or by special delegation from him; but we nowhere find that he has given the people a commission to appoint to the ministerial office; and as the pretended precedents for lay-ordination, which have been above examined, afford no countenance to it, we may without hesitation conclude that it is an assumption of power by the laity entirely unauthorized.

Those who advocate the *third* opinion, that the right to ordain ministers belongs to presbyters, endeavour to support it by the following arguments.

1. The ministerial commission given by Christ to the Apostles, empowered them to ordain suc-

¹ James, *Christian Fellowship*, p. 10. Turner of Abing., *Compend.* p. 69.

cessors in the sacred ministry ; which power, it is urged, must be conveyed with the ministerial office, to all whom they invested with it by virtue of this commission ; and therefore all who are fixed in the ministry by virtue of the same commission, are empowered by it to ordain others also. Now the commission to the Apostles is general, empowering them to disciple all nations, and to incorporate them into a spiritual society ; but they were left to their own judgment, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, in regard to the particular means of effecting it ; and, if they saw fit, they might make a distinction of officers in the church, and invest them with different powers. Such being the real intent and purport of the commission, it forms no proof whatever for the affirmation, that presbyters who are duly called and commissioned, must likewise, by virtue of the same commission, have a right to ordain others¹."

¹ See P. ii. ch. iii. § ii. 2. This argument is ingeniously put by Calamy, *Reas. of Nonconf.* vol. ii. p. 91. et seq. ; and most ably refuted by Hoadly, *Defence of Episcop. Ordinat.* ch. ii. § 2. The identity of bishops and presbyters was a favourite argument with the older Presbyterians ; which identity has been freely acknowledged, but shown in § ii. 3. of this chapter, p. 200, not to conclude against an order of ministers *above* them, and with higher powers. Presbyteral ordination has also been defended from the fact that in Acts i. 26 ; xiv. 23 ; there were more than one ordainer. But the ordainers were apostles ; and therefore, it certainly is not in favour of ordination by presbyters.

2. In Acts xiii. 1—3, it is related that “there were in the church at Antioch, certain prophets and teachers—and as they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted, and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.” This is represented as an instance of Presbyterian ordination; but with how little reason will appear from a few remarks.

That Paul and Barnabas were not on this occasion invested with the Apostolic office may be gathered from this, that it was conferred by immediate delegation from Christ, not by imposition of hands. The twelve were called and ordained by Christ himself; and when a place became vacant in the Apostolic college by the apostacy of Judas, the appointment of Matthias was from the Lord. St. Paul, moreover, had been an Apostle long before, Acts ix. ; and that, too, “not of man, neither by men, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father,” Gal. i. 1, 15, 16, 17., where he says, that “immediately” after his conversion he “went to them which were apostles before him;” of course he considered himself as an apostle from the period of Christ’s appearance to him. He frequently asserts his apostolical commission to have been from Christ, Rom. i. 5; 1 Cor. i. 17; 1 Tim. i. 1. Barnabas, whatever designation we may choose to give

him, for he is called a "prophet," Acts xiii. 1; and an "apostle," ch. xiv. 14; was in the ministry previous to this transaction, as is evident from Acts ix. 26, 27.—xi. 21. et seq.; Gal. ii. 1, 9. Paul and Barnabas, then, were invested with the sacred commission both before, and independently of, the ceremony in question; if, therefore, it were a real ordination, we must admit the absurd supposition that St. Paul was twice ordained. Nay, as it is called the being "recommended to the grace of God," ch. xiv. 26, and Paul is shortly afterwards said to be "recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God," ch. xv. 40., we must admit that he was thrice ordained. These reasons sufficiently prove that the ceremony performed was not an ordination in the appropriate sense of investiture to a sacred office.

Supposing it however, to have been strictly speaking an ordination, it was to a particular mission of an extraordinary kind, and by the special command of the Holy Ghost, which said, "Separate me Barnabas and Paul for the work whereunto I have called them." It can, therefore, be no precedent for others to ordain, who have not such an extraordinary commission from the Spirit. Besides, if even it were an ordination, where is the evidence that the persons performing it were presbyters? The five persons concerned in the transaction, including Paul and Barnabas, are called "prophets and teachers;"

titles not descriptive of a particular office, but of a general import, and applied to all orders, to Christ for instance, John iii. 2. ; to apostles, Acts xv. 32 ; 1 Thess. i. 1. compared with ch. ii. 6 ; 1 Tim. ii. 7 ; 2 Tim. i. 11 ; and to private Christians, Acts xix. 6 ; xx. 9. As Paul and Barnabas were apostles, Acts xiv. 14, it should rather seem that the three others, whose names are joined with them, were also of apostolic rank. There is not, however, an atom of proof that they were presbyters. Upon the whole, the imposition of hands in this case appears to have been nothing more than a solemn benediction, or recommendation to the grace of God, as it is called, ch. xiv. 26 ; but whatever was its purport, it cannot in any point of view afford the least countenance to Presbyterian ordination.

3. Another argument is raised upon St. Paul's exhortation to Timothy, " Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery," 1 Tim. iv. 14. Whether this relates to an ordination, is involved in some uncertainty. The word " gift," *χάρισμα*, can scarcely here mean the ministerial office, as its usual acceptation is *a favor, a gift* ; and as the accompanying expression " that is in thee " cannot be correctly spoken of an office : a man may be put into an office, but it cannot be said to be in him. The term " presbytery " is by some referred to the office, and according to this view

the passage will mean "neglect not the gift of presbytery or priesthood, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of hands." Again, taking it as denoting a number of presbyters, yet, as this word is sometimes applied to apostles, by "presbytery" may be meant a college of apostles and bishops. To say the least, then, the passage is of doubtful application.

Still the scope of this part of the epistle, and the expressions in the text itself, give *probability* to its reference to the ordination of Timothy. In the apostolical age the persons proper to be invested with offices in the church were sometimes pointed out by revelation of the Spirit, Acts xiii. 2; xx. 28: and this seems to be intended in the expression, "by prophecy," as compared with ch. i. 18. "Presbytery," also, probably, though not certainly, means *an assembly of Christian elders, or presbyters*: and the gift is not said to be conferred BY, διὰ, but WITH, μετὰ, the putting on of their hands, evidently pointing them out as *concurring*, not conferring the gift. The meaning may, therefore, be, Neglect not to exercise the spiritual gifts and graces which were given thee by the imposition of my hands at thy ordination, according to the prophecy delivered concerning thee, as a fit person for the episcopal office, together with the laying on of the hands of the college of presbyters. This is the most natural construction, as agreeing best

with the probable meaning of the terms, and as being the only one which reconciles it with 2 Tim. i. 6, where the Apostle exhorts his beloved son to "stir up the gift of God, which is in thee, by the putting on of my hands." The gift was conveyed by imposition of the Apostle's hands, and the presbytery, acting in subordination to him, signified their concurrence. This is the real force and import of the passage.

The weakness of the alleged grounds for presbyterian ordination must now be apparent. No instance is to be found in the New Testament of an ordination performed merely by presbyters. Though their duties are pointed out with distinctness and particularity, not a single precept is addressed to them respecting the imposition of hands, nor any text occurs from which their right to grant orders can be inferred. Whatever directions are given on the subject of ordination, are given to persons superior to presbyters. The only remaining opinion, then, that of the Episcopalians, is, as it should seem, sufficiently established by the rejection of all other claims. If neither individual laymen, nor a congregation of believers, nor mere presbyters, have the power to ordain, it follows that this right must belong to the highest of church officers, the episcopal order. Though nothing more is in strictness required, some direct evidence shall now be adduced.

1. Our Saviour took not upon himself the

mission which He had received of the Father, till He was consecrated to it by the Holy Ghost; and while He lived on earth He reserved to Himself the power of ordaining ministers. He gave both to the twelve Apostles, and to the seventy disciples, instructions and authority to preach, but not to delegate their power to others. Afterwards, when He was no longer to be the *visible* governor of the church, He gave a plenary commission to the Apostles, and ordained them to the supreme sacerdotal office, with these words, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost, &c.," John xx. 22. This commission, as we have seen, conveys the power of government, and the power of delegation. Accordingly, the Apostles exercised the privilege of ordination themselves, and transferred it to others, who succeeded them as chief governors of the church. Hence the right of ordaining rests with those who by continual succession are vested with apostolic rank.

2. The only rules to be found in the New Testament, respecting the subject of ordination are directed to Timothy and Titus, who, it has been proved, were superior to presbyters. This is the more remarkable, as presbyters had been already settled both in Ephesus and Crete, men doubtless fully competent to manage the business of ordaining; yet, instead of giving any directions concerning it to the elders in those places, St. Paul devolves it entirely upon Timothy and Titus; plainly evidencing that the right of

ordination was to be placed in the hands of persons superior to presbyters.

3. The original commission gave to the Apostles authority to rule over the subjects of Christ's spiritual kingdom; and the right of delegating power and office is inseparable from the right of government. In all civil societies it belongs to the supreme governors to appoint the subordinate magistrates; and bishops, as the chief governors of the church, must consequently be possessed of the same power. It is contrary to reason that *any* authority, either in church or state, can be lawfully exercised, except what is derived from those in whom the supreme authority is lodged. It is especially necessary in ecclesiastical regimen; for the well-being of the church, which consists in unity, in the truth of the doctrine, and in obedience to the institutions of Christ, depends in an eminent manner upon the character and conduct of those to whom the office of teaching is committed. The bishops, then, by virtue of their office of superintendents and guardians of the church, possess the sole privilege of deputing such persons as they shall judge well qualified for the work of the ministry.

4. St. Paul exhorts the Ephesian elders to take heed to the flock "over the which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers," Acts xx. 28. As it will not be pretended that these had received an immediate and miraculous call, their appoint-

ment by the Holy Ghost must have been through the instrumentality of the Apostles, who were authorized to delegate the ministerial office to others, and by the imposition of whose hands these elders were sanctified with grace for the ministry. The same Apostle ordained Timothy, 2 Tim. i. 6, and, in conjunction with Barnabas, ordained elders, in several churches, Acts xiv, 23. Ordination, then, was the privilege of the Apostolic office, and consequently must descend to their successors, who have been proved to be the ministers of the episcopal order.

5. Writing to Timothy, St. Paul charges him to "lay hands suddenly on no man," 1 Tim. v. 22, and the things which he had heard among many witnesses to "commit to faithful men, who should be able to teach others also," 2 Tim. ii. 2, which is clear proof that the right of ordaining was intrusted to Timothy. Various directions also are given him for the purpose of enabling him to know how to conduct himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, 1 Tim. iii. 15; and many of these relate to the choice of bishops or presbyters, and deacons, which implies that the selection and appointment of them rested with him.

6. To Titus the Apostle says, "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I appointed thee," Tit. i. 5. The original, *καταστήσεις*, is more

decisive of the question than the word "ordain;" for it denotes *to set one up in any office, to appoint to any station or duty*: so that the whole business of selecting and admitting persons to the presbytership was committed to Titus. That both Timothy and Titus were in the ecclesiastical sense bishops, has been before evinced; and it is beyond the reach of doubt that both were intrusted with the privilege of appointing to the ministry; it therefore follows that, according to the apostolical institution, the power of ordaining ministers in the church is attached to the episcopal office. By the establishment of this fact we are also furnished with an additional argument in support of episcopacy; for, as religion abhors compulsion, the right to ordain is communicated to them free and unfettered, with full liberty to admit or reject; and this being the prerogative of a particular class of ministers, proves such an imparity as saps the foundation of Presbyterianism and Independency.

Having now ascertained the persons to whom the exclusive right of ordaining belongs, there only remains the *third* branch of the subject, the manner of performing it; which will require but few observations, since the particular ceremonies to be used in solemnly setting apart to the ministry are left to the discreet regulation of the church, with the exception of imposition of hands. In the Old Testament this ceremony was of customary use in benediction and blessing,

Gen. xiv. 20; in offering sacrifices to God, **Exod. xxix. 10**; **Levit. i. 4**; **iv. 15**; **viii. 14**; in bearing witness, **Levit. xxiv. 14**; **Deut. xiii. 9**; and, what is more to the purpose, it was the established custom in appointing to office, and conveying the rights and authority belonging to it. Thus in consecrating the Levites to God, the children of Israel put their hands on them, **Numb. iii. 12**; **viii. 10, 11**. Moses laid his hand upon Joshua in ordaining him to be the successor in his office, **Numb. xxvii. 18—23**.

In the New Testament, besides being employed in benediction, **Mark x. 16**; in curing of bodily diseases, **Mark xvi. 18**; **Luke xiii. 13**; **Acts ix. 17**; in conveying the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, **Acts viii. 17**; **xix. 6**; it was the constant rite in the ordination of church officers. All the examples recorded of ordination by the apostles were accompanied with imposition of hands. Thus St. Paul, together with the presbytery, laid hands upon Timothy, **1 Tim. iv. 14**. The gifts and graces requisite for the discharge of the sacred ministry were conferred by the imposition of hands, **2 Tim. i. 6**; and the precept to “lay hands suddenly on no man,” **1 Tim. v. 22**, which undoubtedly has reference to the delegation of church officers, implies that it is a duty for ordination to be performed by laying on of hands.

The general result is, that bishops alone are empowered to commission, or, in other words, to

ordain to the work of the ministry. It is their exclusive right and privilege ; for which reason no one can lawfully assume the office of a Christian minister without a call and commission, which, in the ordinary course of things, must be granted by some authority vouchsafed by Christ to remain permanently in the church ; and this authority, as we have shown, is the episcopal. Hence the necessity of apostolical succession ; since such only can be lawful and regularly-appointed ministers, who are duly commissioned by those to whom the apostles have delegated the power to call and send labourers into the Lord's vineyard. No man can any more by his own authority make a priest, or commission a person to declare God's will, and to officiate in Christ's name, than he can change the means of grace, or enlarge the number of the sacraments. The authority must come from Christ, for the conveyance of which is required an uninterrupted succession of authorized persons from Christ. There must, therefore, have been, and must for ever be, an order of men invested with the high authority and privilege of delegation, and continued in the church by perpetual succession, who can alone give a title and warrant to declare authoritatively the terms of salvation, and to administer the sacraments. Such a title is indispensable to give validity to the ministrations of religion ; because a commission from the Holy Ghost is necessary for the exercise of

the ministerial office, and no one can now receive it except by ordination by those who received their authority in a continued succession from the apostles. Episcopacy, then, being the only instituted method of perpetuating the priesthood, we cannot, on scriptural grounds, expect the divine blessing and approbation even upon the means of grace, if we presume to apply them otherwise than God's Word doth allow.

It is easy to cavil by alleging that a perpetual succession of bishops requires a perpetual succession of true doctrine; that it is subject to great historical uncertainty; that a single link broken in the chain nullifies the claim; that the corruption of the hands through which it is conveyed will destroy its integrity; that the admission of such a principle would unchurch all Christian societies, but the episcopal. Petty cavils like these may accord with petty minds; but the faithful Christian will with meek and reverent submission receive the doctrine set forth in the volume of Revelation; he will confide in Christ's promise to be with men endowed with apostolical and sacerdotal power to the end of all things; and, well knowing that a special providence watches over the moral as well as the natural world, he will not believe that God can suffer his established order to be broken, or his ordinances to fail through the omission, the error, the frailty, or the corruption of man. Nor ought our confidence in a Gospel truth to

be shaken by any consequence to which, in the fallible judgment of some, it may be supposed to lead. Celestial mercy has devised a plan for the pardon of sin consistently with infinite justice; and involuntary error will be righteously dealt with; but our business is, without presuming to judge others, to search the Scriptures with devout prayer, and to believe in very faithfulness the whole evangelic doctrine; of which not the least important is the solemn and awakening truth that none can lawfully enter the ministry without being duly called and commissioned; that a superior order of ministers with delegated power to grant this commission was instituted by our Saviour; and that this order is to be perpetuated by a true succession so long as a visible church shall exist. This apostolical succession is absolutely requisite to preserve a commissioned ministry in the world; for, as Law observes, "if the commission itself be to descend through ages; and distinguish the clergy from the laity; it is certain the persons who alone can give this commission, must descend through the same ages, and consequently an uninterrupted succession is as necessary, as that the clergy have a divine commission¹."

VI. The peculiar duties of deacons remain to be considered; the only question, however,

¹ Postscript to Second Letter. Law has treated the doctrine of a succession with a clearness and force altogether irresistible.

requiring discussion is, whether the office be, as the Dissenters imagine, merely temporal, confined to the ordering and management of worldly affairs, or a spiritual one.

1. That it is really a spiritual office may be concluded from the fact already established, of a threefold gradation in the Christian ministry; for the diaconate being one, though the lowest, of these gradations, must be truly and essentially of a spiritual nature, conferring the right to minister in the performance of divine services.

2. The same inference results from the first institution of deacons as related in the sixth chapter of Acts. They are not, it is true, so denominated by the sacred historian, for the title "deacon," though applied to them in the title of the chapter, is not given them in the text; and it is moreover certain that they were partly designed to "serve tables," to superintend and direct the daily administration of relief to the poor; yet several reasons concur to prove that they were also intended for a further ministry in divine offices. They were to be "full of the Holy Ghost," *i. e.* of the gifts of the Spirit, which can scarcely be thought necessary for the distribution of alms. Again, the apostles only desire the disciples to choose the persons, but they specify the qualifications required for the office, and reserve to themselves the appointment; and finally do appoint them by devout prayer, and imposition of hands, ver. 6. They

were, therefore, admitted by ordination, a rite which surely would not have been used in appointing to a temporary and civil office. We have no example of its employment for any other than spiritual objects; whereas it was the known and sacred rite by which the apostles delegated men to the ministry of the church; and that office must also have been partly at least a spiritual one, to which these seven persons were thus solemnly elected and ordained.

3. Of the men here spoken of some actually exercised the sacred functions. Stephen "full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people," and his adversaries "were not able to resist the wisdom and spirit by which he spake," Acts vi. 8, 10. Philip, also one of the seven, is expressly called an evangelist, ch. xxi. 8; and, having gone down to the city of Samaria, "preached Christ unto them," ch. viii. 5; in consequence of which the people, "when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women," ver. 12; and it can scarcely be doubted by him who first preached the Gospel to them. Being afterwards sent by the Holy Ghost to convert the Æthiopian eunuch, "he opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture, (the prophecy of Isaiah) and preached unto him Jesus," ver. 35. When the Æthiopian nobleman believed, "they went down both into

the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him," ver. 38; after which Philip "was found at Azotus; and passing through he preached in all the cities," ver. 40. This surely is decisive evidence to prove the deaconship a sacred order of the ministry.

4. The qualifications required for a deacon are nearly the same as for bishops, and are expressed in nearly the same words, 1 Tim. iii. 8—12; and the conclusion cannot reasonably be avoided, that the diaconate is also a spiritual office. They are not to be "double tongued," not to be deceitful and inconsistent in their words, ver. 8. They are to "hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience," ver 9; that is, both to profess the true doctrine, and to maintain a pure conscience; and before admission to the office they must "first be proved," ver. 10; examined and put to the proof whether they are sound in the faith, and irreproachable in conduct. All these particulars show that it was the part of a deacon not only to believe the mystery of the faith, but to communicate it; they are all characteristics of a spiritual function, for the discharge of which they are represented as indispensable; but they are such as it cannot be thought St. Paul would insist upon for the appointment to a mere civil office.

5. The apostle says, "They that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree," 1 Tim. iii. 13; viz. an honour-

able step to further promotion; meaning, of course, in the ministry; for this part of the epistle relates to the ministers of the church. Both the context, and the exact philological import of the term *βαθμὸν*, rendered "a good degree," demonstrate the meaning to be, that those deacons who use their office well purchase for themselves promotion to a higher rank in the same ministry, namely to that of bishops or presbyters. This is acknowledged by almost all the best commentators; but, should it be interpreted, as the Dissenters recommend, of an honourable rank and distinction in the Church; yet, the church being a spiritual society, any eminence or higher degree in it must be of a spiritual description, and therefore the diaconate being a step to it must likewise be a spiritual office.

6. Of this there is this further proof, that the diaconate is described as attached to those who were unquestionably preachers and spiritual persons. Such are the instances of Stephen and Philip above-mentioned; Timothy also is described as being a deacon as well as a bishop; for in 1 Thess. iii. 2. he is called "a minister of God," which in the Greek is "God's deacon;" and the Apostle's admonition to him is, "make full proof of thy ministry," in the Greek "fulfil thy office of deacon." 2 Tim. iv. 5. St. Paul was put into the diaconate, 1 Tim. i. 12., where, though rendered in the standard version "putting me into the ministry," the original is "into the

diaconate;" and the apostolate in Acts i. 25. according to the Greek text is called "a diaconate." Surely then it would be unreasonable to doubt the spiritual character of the office, when we find it combined with, or rather included under, ministers of an acknowledged sacred order.

The conclusion now established has an important bearing upon the present controversy. Nonconformists acknowledge only two orders of ministers, presbyters and deacons; and believe the office of the former to be strictly spiritual, that of the latter avowedly temporal; but if this view is erroneous, if deacons are a spiritual order, and can both exercise, and are recorded to have exercised, a spiritual function, there must be at least two orders of spiritual ministers. Hence, as they admit only one, their ministry cannot be constituted according to the ordinance of Christ; and not being so, their ministrations must be defective; their whole system consequently totters, being founded upon a species of church administration decidedly unscriptural.

7. It has been debated whether the offices of the ministry conferred by a due call and commission are perpetual or temporary; that is to say, whether they may be resigned or taken away at any time afterwards. As the Scriptures do not furnish any particular directions on this point, it is a question involved in considerable difficulty; yet when it is considered that so solemn a dedication to the service of God, can-

not, except under very peculiar circumstances, be renounced without impiety; that as the authority conveyed by the ministerial commission comes from God, it cannot be forfeited or taken away, except by the same power which gave it; that the ministerial office implies a renunciation of secular avocations, and the devotion of the entire heart and soul to the discharge of its duties; that it is undertaken under something like a vow to devote a man's whole power and ability to the service of God, which cannot but include the whole life; and that, as far as appears, neither the apostles nor the ministerial orders under them, ever put off their orders;—it seems most consistent with the sacred character, with the nature of a holy function, and with the service with which they are engaged, to believe that the ecclesiastical offices conveyed by ordination can only terminate with life.

CHAPTER IV.

CHURCH AUTHORITY.

1. One of the stoutest champions of dissent avers that the controversy “turns upon the single point of the 20th Article, viz. *That the church hath power to decree rites and ceremonies, and authority in matters of faith.* For if the church hath really this authority and power, then all objections of Dissenters about sponsors, the cross in baptism, kneeling at the Lord’s supper, and every other thing, are impertinent and vain : the church having this authority ought to be reverently obeyed¹.” A plain acknowledgment this, that those who agree with the fundamental articles propounded by the church, cannot justify their secession, except by denying her right to propound them. Yet, so inveterate is prejudice,

¹ Towgood, Dissent, &c. p. 2.

this acute, though unlearned writer failed to perceive, or had not the candour to own, that every Christian society, however limited in numbers, *must* exercise some kind of ecclesiastical authority.

Many things relating to the service of our Maker are not particularly determined by revelation. Bishops, for instance, are to "lay hands suddenly on no man;" but the previous trial and examination to which such as are candidates ought to be subjected as a test of their proficiency and behaviour, are not prescribed. We are commanded to assemble together for the worship of God, Heb. x. 25; but the time, the place, the habit, the offices to be performed, the order of proceeding, are no where set down. Prayer is a commanded duty; but no injunctions are given for the use of extemporaneous prayer, and none for the singing of psalms in metre. The sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper are imperative; yet we find no express enactments as to the manner of administering them. All things are to "be done decently and in order," 1 Cor. xiv. 40; but the methods by which this is to be effected, are not expressed. Heretics are to be rejected, Tit. iii. 10; but neither the mode of procedure, nor the terms of church communion are expressly defined. In these, and many other cases, the church *must* interpose; public religion could not otherwise be maintained; and it cannot be wrong

in the church to prescribe in such matters, where the Scriptures are silent; "for where no law is, there is no transgression." Rom. iv. 15.

It is not the design of revelation to furnish minute directions on every point; something is left to the prudent decision of the church. In the Mosaic Law, the erection of synagogues and the services performed in them are not expressly enjoined, yet they are approved, Acts xv. 21; and our Saviour sanctified them by his presence. The apostle speaks of customs established in the churches, yet no account is given of them in the New Testament. Many things likewise of a ceremonial kind must be referred to the judgment of the church, and cannot be otherwise; for what is decent and edifying in one age, may, by a change of circumstances, be quite the reverse in another; and things variable in their own nature cannot properly be fixed by any antecedent determination. No society in fact ever associated for religious purposes without decreeing rites and ceremonies, without exercising some authority in controversies of faith. Of the multifarious sects now existing, each has its peculiar regulations, and its peculiar articles of faith; which, though unwritten, are so far coercive that no one would be suffered to minister among them, or even be admitted into membership, who did not profess to adhere to these articles and rules.

The exercise of church authority, then, must

exist somewhere ; and as authority is inseparable from, or rather is identified with government, it must be vested in those to whom Christ has committed the government of the church, who are the ministerial orders, as shown in the second chapter of this part. Now all governing power may be distinguished into the legislative and the executive functions ; into the power to make laws, and the power to administer them. The latter is the right and privilege of the episcopal order, who have the control and superintendency over the other ministers, and over the general affairs of the church¹ ; but to whom does the right of legislating belong ? Though bishops, by virtue of their office, administer the ecclesiastical laws, are they also empowered to enjoin articles of faith, to decree rites and ceremonies, and to enact laws for the regulation of the members of the church ? This is a question no less difficult than important ; for, as the church is possessed of a spiritual power, it is necessary to ascertain how she is to exert it when occasions occur which call for its exercise. It must clearly be through the medium of one or more of the ministerial orders, for to them is committed the entire governing power of the church ; but when she wields her supreme spiritual authority in those matters which concern her spiritual affairs, when she exercises her legislative power,

¹ As shown in § v. p. 245, of the preceding chap.

is it to be by one order, or by all the three conjointly? But before entering upon this question, a few preliminary observations are required.

Though the catholic or universal church of Christ is, and can be but one, it is ramified into a variety of branches, each independent as to the government and regulation of its own concerns, yet all joined to the Head by one common and indissoluble bond of union. The power which belongs to the universal church, if it could act in one body, devolves upon each true branch; for which reason the authority which may be lawfully exercised by the church catholic, may be lawfully exercised by every separate and particular church.

As the church is a spiritual society, the power which belongs to it must be of the same nature. It relates entirely to the next world, and to the eternal interests of the soul; consequently is distinct from that of the civil magistrate; and therefore, in ascribing authority to the church, it must be understood of such as is spiritual.

The authority claimed for the church must likewise be understood of such as is exercised in entire subjection to Christ, the supreme Head and Legislator of the whole Christian family. She has no authority *independent* of the authority of Christ. The commission given by our Lord is, "teach them to observe all things,

whatsoever I have commanded you;" and the governors of the church acting by this commission have no right to change or abrogate his commands, or to ordain any thing in contravention to the Divine laws. The church can have no farther power than Christ has been pleased to communicate to her. She has no power to impose new conditions of salvation; nor to decree any ceremony in opposition to the inspired volume; but whenever she speaks, whenever she commands, it must be in accordance with the oracles of God. Following the direction of Scripture, she can only declare what she conceives to be its sacred doctrines, and only propose such methods of inculcating them, as she deems most conducive to the edification of her members. In all her proceedings she owns subjection to Christ; and she only assumes such authority as, in her judgment, is consistent with the Word of God. As the Scriptures leave some things to the discretion of individuals, so is it with the church: she has a discretionary power; but, in claiming this for her, it must be taken as limited to those things alone which our blessed Lord has left to her judgment and decision. When therefore she is called upon to decide in such cases as come within the authority and jurisdiction committed to her by her Divine Founder and Governor, are the three orders of her ministry in conjunction, or only

the highest of them, empowered to pronounce her decision? Many reasons concur for attributing this privilege to them collectively.

1. The apostles, to whom Christ entrusted the government of the church, were endued with co-equal power and jurisdiction. It is not meant to deny a certain pre-eminence of some above the rest; for Peter, James, and John are constantly distinguished beyond the other apostles. They are called pillars, Gal. ii. 9; and were accounted chief apostles, 2 Cor. xi. 5; xii. 11. Of these Peter seems to have had a primacy of order; for in the catalogues of the apostles extant in Scripture he is named first; and other circumstances are recorded of him which indicate some pre-eminence in the apostolic college. But they had all the same office, and that, too, the highest; for when Christ ascended up on high, he gave "first apostles," 1 Cor. xii. 28; and they possessed co-ordinate jurisdiction in the management of all ecclesiastical affairs. They were to sit on twelve thrones, Matt. xix. 28; and our Lord rebuked James and John when they desired to sit, the one on his right hand, and the other on his left in his kingdom, Matt. xx. 21. They are constantly spoken of as having equal authority, Acts ii. 14, 37, 42; iv. 1, 6, 45; viii. 14; Gal. i. 1, et seq.; Ephes. ii. 20; 2 Cor. xi. 5. When any difficulty arose, or when any thing required to be explained or set in order, they

were equally appealed to, and their sentence decided the matter. The texts Matt. xvi. 18, 19, Luke xxii. 31, 32, John xxi. 15, 17, upon which the Romanists mainly build the primacy of St. Peter, are utterly insufficient. Now from this co-equal power of the apostles we may safely infer that of their successors, the bishops, who consequently when called upon to legislate, since they have a parity of powers, ought to have a parity of voice in the decision of what concerns the church to which they belong.

2. Again, it was the practice of the apostles to assemble together for the purpose of determining any important matter. Thus they met together to ordain one to fill up the vacant apostolate, Acts i. 13; they were assembled on the day of Pentecost to wait for the effusion of the Spirit, ch. ii. 1; so they were to institute the order of deacons, ch. vi. 1; they were assembled to resolve the differences which had arisen respecting the circumcision of the Gentiles, ch. xv. 1. So also should their successors jointly decide the questions relating to the church after joint inquiry and deliberation. This, it is true, goes no farther than to prove both the authority of bishops, and their obligation in all deliberative enactments to decide not individually, but *con-jointly*. But the fact of the apostolic practice supplies no small evidence that it is the divine will for matters relating to the spiritual welfare

of the church to be decided by those who have authority when met together in a council or assembly.

3. Other circumstances enable us to carry the argument still farther. Not only did the apostles legislate collectively, but the other orders of ministers were, sometimes at least, joined with them. The apostles and elders (presbyters) are frequently so named together as to show that the latter had a certain concurrent jurisdiction with the former. No one will doubt of this who shall attentively peruse the following passages, Acts xi. 30; xv. 4, et seq.; xvi. 4; xx. 17; compared with ver. 28. It is contrary to all reason to suppose that such a mode of speaking would have been used if they had not participated in the decision. The united decision therefore of different orders of ministers in council assembled is sanctioned by the example of the apostles.

4. Christ is stated to have appointed different orders in the church "for the work of the ministry, for the edifying the body of Christ," Ephes. iv. 11, 12; comp. 1 Cor. xii. 28. Now the regulation of the various matters within the province of the church's authority, and the making laws in certain cases relative to spiritual affairs, form part of that work, and are necessary for that edification; consequently are to be executed by all the orders of the ministry conjointly.

5. A deliberative voice seems to be neces-

sarily included in the ministerial office. Those who are regularly ordained are "the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God," 1 Cor. iv. 1; and it is impossible to discharge rightly the duties demanded of them as faithful stewards, without judging and deciding on many questions involving the eternal interests of those committed to their charge. "There is an empire in preaching, says Bishop Jeremy Taylor, there is a power of command which the bishops and ministers of the church of God must exercise¹." A commission to declare the whole counsel of God implies an authority to declare and enjoin articles of faith. Ministers likewise are to "feed the flock of God, taking the oversight thereof," 1 Pet. v. 2; and how can they do this without a power to make those regulations which such oversight of the flock requires? Those who watch for souls must in the performance of their duty enjoin what concerns the soul's good. Such a power as we have here described belongs to the office of every minister, who consequently has a right to a voice in decreeing those canons which concern the church in general.

6. It has been proved by convincing evidence in a former chapter, that the government of the

¹ Ductor Dubitant. lib. 3. cap. 4. rule 1. This can hardly be reconciled with what is said of the power of a bishop in the next rule; but in discoursing on church authority this eloquent prelate is not always consistent, and is sometimes confused.

Christian church is invested in the ministerial order. Now the legislative power is inseparable from the right of government, that is, of the supreme authority, either in church or state; and if the latter is committed to the ministry, as a ministry, each of the orders of which it consists must be possessed of co-equal legislative power.

7. The question is completely set at rest by the circumstances attending the first council at Jerusalem, Acts xv. 1, et seq. The Apostles and elders are described as principals in the whole transaction; and the decisions to which they came are expressly denominated the decrees of them both conjointly, ch. xvi. 4. Here, then, is an example of different orders of the ministry met together for the purpose of consulting about an important question relating to church communion; and, after mature deliberation, passing a decree which had the force of authority and law with the disciples. It was delivered to be observed by persons who gave no consent, either personally or by deputies; and hence forms a precedent for the enactment of laws relating to the spiritual concerns of the church, by the united consent of the three orders of ministers, and for the observance of her members without asking their consent.

Hence the church exercises her legislative authority, through the medium of her three-fold ministry; while the executive power, the right

to execute what she has the right to enjoin is committed to the highest order, that of bishops. By this arrangement, an effective church government is secured in perfect consistency with the Christian liberty of presbyters. If the legislative, as well as the administrative power were lodged in the hands of the episcopal order alone, not only might regulations be adopted oppressive to the inferior orders, but the dicta of the bishop would have the force of law, and whatever HE commanded within the province of ecclesiastical authority must be obeyed. Whatever he might prescribe within these limits for the direction of the presbyters under him, they would have no plea to refuse obedience. But as bishops, who are the executive government of the church, are confined individually to the execution of the laws, in the enactment of which the whole ministerial orders have had a voice, if they should in any way go beyond these laws the inferior ministers may lawfully resist them. In the Anglican church, for example, no presbyter hesitates to oppose whatever is judged to be an illegal stretch of episcopal authority, or to controvert any supposed erroneous doctrine, which a bishop may deliver in a charge, or publish to the world; and this, too, is deemed consistent with the deference and obedience which is due to the diocesan; because it is merely the opinion of an individual, who, though a bishop, has no independent authority

to decree either ceremonies or articles of faith, or to go farther personally than to put in force the existing laws and canons of the church.

As the ministerial orders of the whole visible church cannot assemble together in one place for deliberation, a necessity arises for the appointment of a select number of delegates to represent them. These constitute a general or ecumenical council, which, it is evident, should not "be gathered together without the commandment and will of princes;" for ecclesiastical persons are subject to the civil government under which they live, whose privileges would be infringed, if their subjects were summoned away at the command of a foreign prince or prelate; and the consequences might be dangerous to the good order and civil peace of states.

In like manner, whenever the ministers of any particular branch of the universal church are too numerous to meet together, it seems the natural course to legislate by a representative assembly. Such an aggregate meeting, perhaps, may, like an ecumenical council, and for the same reasons, require the consent of the civil power to its assembling; yet it is the indefeasible right of the people to meet together for purposes purely religious; and, while they restrain themselves within these boundaries, either personally or by their proxies, and pursue sacred objects alone, it would be a violation of natural liberty for government to refuse such

consent. The same observations apply to provincial synods. But whatever method may be taken for declaring the general voice, or whatever subdivision of meetings be appointed, it will probably be necessary, wherever there exists a numerous body of clergy, to send representatives to a central or national assembly ; for it is not easy to conceive how the sense of the majority, even of provincial synods, can be otherwise collected and authoritatively pronounced. So that, as it should seem, recourse must be had, in every national church, to the system of delegation ; and the simplest and most efficient, if not the only plan, is to elect representatives to a national council. Of this the first council at Jerusalem furnishes an example and a precedent. A dissension having arisen among the believers in Syria, respecting the obligation of the Levitical law, they send chosen persons to the Apostles and elders at Jerusalem, who meet together to consult upon the business, and the president pronounces their decision, by which the question is finally disposed of. After the same manner, when any occasion calls for the legislative authority of the church to interfere, it may be most fitly exercised through her assembled delegates.

But how are they to be chosen ? This is a question which must be decided by each church for its own practice. The specific manner is of little consequence, since all who receive the mi-

nisterial commission by episcopal ordination must be presumed to be competent to become representatives. Only this may be observed, that, as religion demands publicity, every thing done in reference to it should be open and undisguised. It cannot tolerate those who love darkness rather than light; and of course there should be no over-reaching, no underhand cabal, no secret election, no sneaking ballot. With respect to this last method, a brief digression may be permitted.

The advocates of the ballot seem not aware that the reasons by which it is supported, demonstrate both its inefficacy, and the impolicy of granting an elective franchise to those for whose protection it is intended. The only conceivable grounds for its adoption are the prevention of bribery and undue influence. But those who are so radically base and corrupt as to receive bribes, would, under any circumstances, receive bribes. Human legislation is here powerless; it can only be prevented by a renovation of the heart, which is the work of a divine agent. There is doubtless a *due* influence inseparable from the right of property, and the subordination of rank so necessary to the well-being of society; but *undue* influence is the being led by worldly considerations to act contrary to conviction; and he who can be thus led will, under any circumstances, act from base and mercenary motives. Offenders of this stamp betray a moral

defection which civil laws cannot remedy ; but shroud them in the shades of night ; throw over them the veil of secrecy, and they will only plunge deeper in depravity ; with such, therefore, the secret ballot must be inefficacious. It is weak to argue against granting privileges because they may by possibility be abused ; but it is a conclusive argument against granting them to persons by whom they *will* be abused. Nor does religion permit governments to place their subjects in a condition where, from their native propensity to evil, they will naturally, if not necessarily, be led to transgress the laws of moral obligation. Nay, religion requires them to limit the elective privilege to those whose situation of life may reasonably be supposed to place them out of the reach of bribery and corruption. The sages of reform may sneer at the application of a scriptural argument ; but the more scriptural our views are, even of civil affairs, the more likely are they to be true. A political measure opposed to the principles of Christianity will not work well ; it will produce evil in aggravated succession till, the virús being worn out by continued exulceration, a place shall be found for the introduction of a more Christian system. But to return.

In the convening, attendance, and manner of proceeding in ecclesiastical councils or convocations, much must be left to the discretion of each separate church and nation. The particu-

lar forms are matters of small moment, as well as the title by which they may be distinguished, whether by that of council, general assembly, synod, convocation. The legislative power of the church is lodged in the triple orders of the ministry, who in that way alone can express their deliberative decisions. When it becomes their duty to enact canons for the better ordering the spiritual concerns of the church, they are to be assembled together in council; and after serious consideration and devout prayer for the illumination of the Holy Spirit, they are to give sentence in subordination to the law of Christ; which sentence is to be regarded as the decision of the church upon the subject, and binding upon all her members. Not that it is infallible: Protestantism disavows the claim. The first council at Jerusalem was under the especial guidance of the Spirit; but all others being composed of men fallible individually, must be fallible collectively; and therefore both may err, and have erred, "even in things pertaining to God." Yet they are the highest spiritual authority upon earth next to the holy Scriptures; and are so recognised by the members of the church, who nevertheless believe that "the things ordained by them as necessary to salvation, have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared that they be taken out of holy Scripture." Art. 21.

As the authority in spiritual things belongs

solely to spiritual persons, the laity are not to be joined with them in deliberative and ecclesiastical councils. In some synods of the primitive church, laymen were permitted to vote; but it was not so in the Apostolic Council at Jerusalem¹; neither is it so in the English convocation, which is constituted entirely of ecclesiastics. Bishop Warburton is of a different opinion, and says, "there appears much the same for laymen's sitting in convocations, as for churchmen sitting in parliament²." But with all submission, there is a broad and distinguishing difference. Bishops by assuming the episcopal office, lose not their civil privileges; and have the same civil right as other subjects to be admitted into the legislature; whereas laymen have no commission from Christ, either to rule or minister IN the church; and consequently have no right to legislate in its spiritual concerns. Laymen indeed may be present; and it would seem desirable that some representatives of the civil power should be there to witness and superintend the proceedings; yet they cannot lawfully take any part in them. They are not empowered to give sentence on spiritual ques-

¹ See P. ii. ch. ii. § ii. p. 186.

² Alliance, lib. ii. p. 160. Few will read the uninviting works of Wake, Atterbury, and Kennett, who, however, have treated the subject with profound erudition; but I hope the valuable work of Kempthorne, "The Church's Self-regulating Privilege," will command the attention of the public.

tions, which are to be decided by the spiritual authorities of the church; for it is that decision alone which true churchmen consider binding; and whatever enactments may be passed without it in regard to matters purely religious, they will not regard them as obligatory upon the conscience.

As laws may be altered or repealed by the same power that enacted them, the church may at any time by her representative assembly modify or rescind her articles and canons. Nor, so long as this authority is restrained within the Scriptural limits, does it make any difference as to her right to what extent it may be carried, even to a complete change of ritual and doctrine. At the reformation the Church of England substituted a quite opposite system, but it was still the Church of England; only she then became, what she had not been for some centuries previously, a Scriptural Church; and, were it possible for her to relapse into the darkness of idolatrous superstition, she might adopt the Tridentine creed, and remain the Church of England still; just as vast changes have been effected in our civil constitution at different periods, but it is the British constitution still. Changes, either ritual or doctrinal, made by legitimate authority, cannot annul the ecclesiastical identity of any church, if the expression may be allowed, any more than the sinner's conversion to newness of life can destroy his personal identity.

In the present age of ruthless and wanton innovation, it were much to be wished that this subject might be weighed with due seriousness and attention. Let those in whose hands are the destinies of the empire consider calmly, consider devoutly, that the Church of England numbers among her children the chiefest of the nobles, together with the great mass of the respectable, the well-informed, and well-educated; and that all who are upon conviction attached to her communion will reject with conscientious indignation whatever change may be attempted in her spiritual concerns, without being ratified by the spiritual authorities of the church in convocation assembled.

Church authority, in the view above given, is not fairly open to objection, as on the one hand an infringement of the sole prerogative of Christ, the Head and supreme Legislator in his kingdom upon earth, and as on the other an invasion of the rights of private judgment. That cannot derogate from the supremacy of Christ, which is only to be exercised in entire subjection to him. It has been admitted, as a first principle, that ecclesiastical power is to be limited by the written word, whose prescriptions must be its guide and measure¹. Nor can it invade the rights of conscience, since the church, so far from offering to compel, leaves every one at liberty to embrace or reject her communion.

¹ See ante, p. 297.

But so long as she confines her authority within the Scriptural limits, she is entitled to obedience; and no one can be justified in resisting her laws, or separating from her, merely on account of the exercise of an authority which has been intrusted to her by the Saviour of the world.

II. Having thus shown the general nature of church authority, and the persons in whom it resides, we must now investigate its EXTENT; which may be most commodiously effected by considering it in relation to articles of faith, to ceremonies, and to discipline. Of these in their order.

As all the power which the church either possesses or claims is to be exercised in entire conformity with, and subordination to, the revealed will of God, her authority in controversies of faith is strictly *interpretive*. She cannot enforce any doctrine, or any rule of life as necessary to salvation, by her own independent authority, but solely because she finds them in the written word. Creeds and articles, therefore, are to be regarded as her public declaration of what she conceives to be the true meaning of Scripture. They are in fact nothing more than her authorized interpretation of the inspired records.

Nor is it absolutely requisite for this to be embodied in writing. Articles of faith are substantially a public recognition of the particular

religious system deduced by the church from the Bible, which, it is obvious, may be made by *tacit* convention. The object to secure an agreement of sentiment on points of faith, and an unanimity of order in divine worship, may be effected by a tacit assent to an unwritten, but recognized system; though by a mode less consistent, and less effectual, than by creeds, articles, and rubrics. The church exerts her authority through the medium of a general assembly or council of her ministers; the only question, then, is, whether through the ministerial orders so convened she has a Scriptural right to make a public declaration of her views of revealed truth, and to impose it as the condition of communion with her. The affirmative is established on the following satisfactory grounds.

1. The right to impose creeds, or, in other words, to declare her own interpretation of Scripture, is inherent in the nature and constitution of the church. It is essential to all societies to regulate the behaviour of their members in such things as relate to the object for which they were instituted. No society could subsist without some kind of government, and the legislative power is inseparable from government; which power, therefore, must belong to the governors of the church. The spiritual character of this society makes no other difference than to limit it to a spiritual power. If it be conceded to earthly rulers under God, why should it be

denied to ecclesiastical rulers under Christ? Both are equally bound to rule according to the divine laws. Without this authority the church would be lifeless, passive, inert, little better than an empty name; she could neither propose tests for candidates to the ministry, nor exclude heretical teachers; she could neither regulate the conduct of her members, nor effect an agreement in faith and worship. Such is the weakness of human nature, that controversies will arise, and Scripture cannot decide, for the dispute is concerning itself; the church, therefore, on her part must decide for herself, and declare what she conceives to be the true sense of it in public formularies, which are to be received by her members, not as the decrees of infallibility, but as the solemnly pronounced judgment of the highest human authority which can interpose between man and his Maker.

2. To every man belongs the unalienable right of private judgment; and therefore every man has a right, by using the best helps he can, to draw his own religious system, his own creed, from the Bible. Other individuals who, by a similar process, have arrived at the same conclusions, may join with him; and thus form a society of persons who adopt corresponding opinions. Such a society cannot be denied the privilege both of avowing openly and publicly their principles, and of announcing their readiness to enrol among their number those who

may adopt the same sentiments. This is a right of which they cannot justly be deprived, provided their tenets are not incompatible with the temporal peace of the community. The right of Christian societies, then, to form articles of faith for their own internal regulation, results from the indefeasible right of private judgment. They must have the same powers and privileges in their collective character, which each individual has in his private capacity. If particular persons are to search the Scriptures, and to form their own exposition of them, which is binding upon their own consciences, the church, which is a congregation of faithful men, may, or rather must, for the same reason declare her exposition, which is binding upon all her members; and this she does by means of creeds, articles, and canons.

3. Every particular church has the same right as other societies to secure its own peace and welfare by whatever lawful means are deemed best fitted for that purpose; and consequently has a right to prescribe such terms of communion as she may judge proper, provided that nothing be required incompatible with the liberty of others. Now, without a general agreement as well in matters of belief as in rituals and modes of worship, a church would soon fall into irretrievable confusion and ruin; to prevent which it is empowered, by the great law of self-preservation, to impose such regulations upon

the members as are necessary for maintaining peace, order, and safety. Its governors may err in judgment as to these regulations; nor is it now the inquiry whether the promulgation of articles of faith be the best mode of securing that object; but if it is the solemn decision of the church that a code of articles is the most effectual, it has an absolute right to propose them as the common principles upon which an union with it is to be grounded.

If all were at liberty to follow their own fancies and inclinations, no union in religious services could long subsist; torn and lacerated with perpetual commotions, they would sooner or later perish through their own internal dissensions. To obviate such a result every Christian society, every independent congregation has its *established* creed. It may not be a written one; but each possesses its recognized standard of Gospel truth, which, as opposed to written formularies, may be called a traditionary test; in conformity with which the ministers are elected; in conformity with which the ministers must preach; in conformity with which the privilege of their church-membership is granted; and woe betide the ill-starred wight who presumes to apostatize from the congregational standard. Some Dissenting chapels are built, and have endowments annexed, on the express condition, that the occupiers of such pulpits inculcate doctrines in accordance with the thirty-

nine articles, or with the Westminster confession of faith; and we have not heard that the endowments in these cases have ever been rejected as a violation of Dissenting consciences and Dissenting principles.

4. Scarcely any duty is more strongly pressed upon believers than that of union and concord, Ps. cxxxiii. 1, 2; John xvii. 11, 22; Acts iv. 32; Ephes. iv. 3—5. They are to be of one mind, Rom. xii. 5, 16; xv. 5, 6; 2 Cor. xiii. 11; Phil. i. 27; iii. 16; 1 Pet. iii. 8; and to avoid all divisions, Matt. xii. 25; Rom. xvi. 17; 1 Cor. i. 10; iii. 3, 4; xi. 18; xii. 25. This godly union cannot be secured unless the same doctrines are inculcated, and the same modes of worship enjoined. But a mere general assent to the New Testament, now that the Christian world is so divided in their interpretation of it, would be a nullity; and the only way of preserving unity is for the church to make a public declaration of the sense in which she understands the Bible, and to impose it as the condition of communion with her.

5. An authoritative exposition of the Christian doctrines is included in the commission given to the ministers of the Gospel, who are to teach all nations whatsoever Christ has commanded them, Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; to declare all the counsel of God, Acts xx. 27; to speak the Word of God in its integrity, without corrupting it, 2 Cor. ii. 17; iv. 2; Ephes. vi. 21; 1 Tim. ii. 7; without

giving heed to false doctrines, to fables and endless genealogies, 1 Tim. i. 3; vi. 3, 4; Tit. i. 14; iii. 9; to rightly divide the word of truth, 2 Tim. ii. 15; to convince gainsayers by sound doctrine, Tit. i. 9; to speak the things that become sound doctrine, in which they are to show uncorruptness, Tit. ii. 1, 7, 8. The end and design, as well as the terms of this commission, imply an authority in the commissioned ministers to promulgate what they conceive to be the true evangelical doctrines; which they cannot faithfully execute without proposing to their flocks that interpretation of the Scriptures which their judgment approves. Whether it be delivered in many or few words, in the form of articles, or in a continuous discourse, it is essentially the same; they are obligated *ex officio* to propose it; and this interpretation their hearers are to receive with deference, Matt. xxiii. 2, 3; 1 Cor. xvi. 16; Heb. xiii. 7, 17. Now, what ministers may do individually, they may conjointly; they may after mutual deliberation assent to the same interpretation of the Bible, and agree to be guided in their ministrations by the same system of doctrines and of worship. The commission, therefore, to preach the Gospel is virtually a commission to deliver a creed for the observance of the flock of Christ.

6. A confession of faith, being a Christian duty, ought to make a part of public worship. Our Saviour says, "whosoever shall confess me

before men, him will I confess also before my Father, which is in heaven," Matt. x. 32. St. John says, "whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God; God dwelleth in him, and he in God," 1 John iv. 15, 16. The following passages which, for the sake of brevity, are merely referred to, supply the like evidence, Acts viii. 37, 38; Rom. ix. 10; 2 Cor. ix. 13; Phil. ii. 10; 1 Tim. vi. 22; Heb. iv. 14—x. 21. 23. A general belief of the Scriptures must be vague and indistinct, since upon them all the widely-varying sects pretend to found their respective opinions; without the help of creeds and recognized formularies, a confession of faith cannot be made in the congregation with that fulness and particularity, that unanimity and deliberate assent, which the duty requires.

7. The use of creeds is sanctioned by our Saviour, whose constant practice it was, before conferring any signal favour, to require a confession of faith. "Believest thou this?" "Dost thou believe?" were his usual interrogatories previous to the performance of a miracle. Short and simple as they were, containing often but one article of faith, they were really forms, were as much and as truly creeds, as any that have been subsequently adopted in the Christian church.

8. "Let all things be done unto edifying," is the apostle's direction to the Corinthians, 1 Cor. xiv. 26. But it was impossible for them to see

that all things were done for edification, until they had first decreed what was edifying: and it was equally impossible for them to decree this, unless they had ample power and authority¹. The injunction, therefore, implies that the Church of Corinth not only had power and authority to determine what doctrines and instructions would contribute to the edification of its members, but was in duty bound to exercise it; which is in reality authorizing and commanding the Corinthian Church to promulge a public standard of faith. The same conclusion may in the same way be drawn from Rom. xiv. 19; 1 Cor. xiv. 5; 2 Cor. xii. 19; Ephes. iv. 12, 16.

9. St. Paul directs Timothy to "charge some that they teach no other doctrine," &c., 1 Tim. i. 3, 4. Without some public and authorized test the presbyters could not have known what would be regarded by the governors of that church as the true doctrines of the Gospel; nor would Timothy have been able to decide whether their preaching was sound or heterodox. There must, consequently, have been some authenticated creed for the Church at Ephesus, or a compliance with this admonition would have been impracticable.

10. The command to Titus is, "A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition, reject;" Tit. iii. 10. Some test must have

¹ See Beveridge, Expos. of the xxth Art.

existed whereby to judge of those who broached heretical notions; the apostle's injunction, therefore, implies the right to form such a public test, and to enforce it on pain of exclusion from communion with the church. No matter what the particular test might have been, either in this, or in the case of Timothy just cited; the argument rests upon the fact, that *some* public and well-known standard of faith existed by which the doctrine of the teachers was to be judged; for the actual existence of such a standard, recognized by the apostle, involves a right in the church to propound a creed for such as she receives within her pale.

11. St. Paul says to Timothy, "These things I write to thee—that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth," 1 Tim. iii. 15. An elaborate discussion of this much controverted passage is not demanded by the argument intended to be built upon it, depending as it does upon the following positions; namely, that the metaphorical expressions, "the pillar and ground," convey the idea of maintaining, guarding, supporting; that "the truth" means the Gospel truth; and that these expressions refer to "the church of the living God," which is here designated "the pillar and ground of the truth." From these positions, which will be generally acknowledged, it may be inferred that

the church cannot maintain, guard, and support the truth without the power, in the *first* place, of distinguishing and deciding what the true faith really is; and in the *next* place, without avowing, declaring, and making an open profession of it. It is of no consequence *how* this decision, declaration, and public profession of the Gospel truth are made; it is the power and authority of doing so, which forms the basis and principle of all creeds, and which the apostle here ascribes to the church ¹.

12. Timothy is commanded to "hold fast the form of sound words," 2 Tim. i. 13, where the word rendered "the form" denotes a sketch, delineation, concise representation²; and consequently "the form of sound words" or doctrine may signify an outline of sound doctrine, a summary of Christian faith, such as is now called a creed. A formulary of faith, then, existed in the age of the apostles, delivered by an apostle to Timothy, with an admonition to hold it fast, to retain it with fidelity and Christian

¹ This text is fully discussed by Suicer. Thesaur. voc. *σύλος*; a summary of which may be found in Deylingius, Obs. Sacræ. P. i. Obs. 66. p. 317. See Wolfius, Macknight, Pref. to 1 Tim. In our xxth Art. the Church is stated to be "a witness and keeper of Holy Writ;" which corresponds with the doctrine above deduced from 1 Tim. iii. 15. The church can in no other way keep in custody and bear witness to the saving truth, than by making a public profession of it in her creeds, and by her officers.

² See Wetstein in Tim. i. 16, Rose's Parkhurst, in voc. *ὑποτύπωσις*.

love. Rom. vi. 17, probably relates to the same.

13. In the Council of Jerusalem, the apostles and elders, after a debate, came to a decision upon a controverted question, and transmitted it as an authoritative decree to be observed by the churches to which it was delivered. In this is furnished an example of the church meeting by its representatives in council, and promulgating articles of faith, and rules of practice; from which we may certainly conclude, that the church has authority in controversies of faith. Now as Bishop Beveridge argues in his exposition of the xxth Article, "if the church had that power then, it cannot be denied to have the same still; for it is the same church now that it was then, governed by the same Head now as it was then, directed by the same Spirit now that it was then, enjoys the same Scriptures to decide controversies by now as it did then, and therefore cannot be denied to have the same power in the decision of controversies now as it had then."

With such precedents and such directions in Scripture, we cannot with any reason deny the right and authority of the church to prescribe a formulary of faith, and to impose it as the condition of communion. The extent to which this authority ought to be carried is left to human prudence and the discretion of ecclesiastical governors; inasmuch as articles of re-

ligion may be varied to meet the errors and heresies which arise in different ages. The church, should it be found expedient, may demand a public confession of belief from those who are received into communion. In the times of the apostles no adult person was admitted into church membership, without a declaration of belief in the leading doctrines of Christianity, as is clear from the instances related in the Acts, of converts expressing their belief before they were baptized, ch. viii. 37; x. 46, 48; xvi. 30, 33. Or she may require nothing more from the laity than that implied or tacit profession of faith, which is made by joining the public worship and sacred ordinances.

The case is far otherwise with those to whom the office of public instruction is intrusted. Some security it is imperative to demand, that they teach no other doctrine than that which the church approves. If they are left at liberty to propagate what opinions they please, the consequence would be, a state of absolute and irremediable confusion. The essential deity of Christ might be proclaimed by the preacher of the morning, and as resolutely denied by the preacher of the evening; from the same pulpit orthodoxy might be inculcated at one time, and heterodoxy at another; in the same chapel the parishioner might to-day hear mass, which, as a protestant, he would consider idolatrous; to-morrow, a sceptical unitarianism, which he

would regard as little less than blasphemous; so that sects and divisions would multiply, till at length the church, and together with it true religion, would be finally destroyed by a war of interminable factions. A result so deplorable can no other way be avoided, than by providing an authorized system of doctrines, and ritual services, binding the ministers by some proper engagement to frame their public instructions in conformity with it.

It is apparent from the New Testament, that the governors of the church ought not to admit any one to the office of Christian pastor, without full proof of his entire assent to the doctrines of the Gospel. Thus Timothy is enjoined to select such for presbyters as were "apt to teach," and such for deacons as "held the mystery of faith in a pure conscience," 1 Tim. iii. 2, 9; and to commit the apostolic doctrine "to faithful men, who should be able to teach others also," 2 Tim. ii. 2. Titus was to make choice of none for the ministry except those who "held fast the faithful word as they had been taught, that they might be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers," Tit. i. 9. It is, therefore, incumbent upon every church to provide that none be admitted to ordination, except such as, by publicly assenting to some form of sound words, testify their firm belief of the doctrines held by that particular church.

Hence appears the fitness, and even necessity

of requiring subscription to articles from the candidates for the ministry; because, without such a test, the unity of faith would be liable to be broken, and the peace of the church disturbed by any rash violator of its doctrine and discipline. It is not an unreasonable imposition, since subscription to a public formulary is in effect only declaring an unfeigned assent to the Bible, in that sense in which it is understood by the church which receives him into its bosom. Neither can it be unjust or burthensome to the consciences of mankind, since no coercion is used, and the candidate enters the ministry by his own voluntary act.

III. The church, having authority to promulgate articles of faith—in other words, to declare the sense in which she understands the Scriptures, must needs have power to decree rites and ceremonies. Doctrinal controversies are of a higher character, and ceremonial ordinances are in some measure comprehended under them; so that if it be lawful for the church to interpose in the greater, it must be so to do the same in the less. Various particulars relating to the outward worship of God,—such as the time and place, the habits and gestures, the service and the ritual,—not being regulated by divine command, must be determined by human authority, for they are essential to all external religion. The Apostolic rule for this determination is, that “all things be done decently, and in

order," 1 Cor. xiv. 40 ; but the application of it is left to the prudence and discretion of every church ; which, of course, is invested with authority to ordain such ritual observances as may be best adapted to promote decency, order, and edification in sacred things. On so plain a case, further enlargement is unnecessary.

IV. In treating of ecclesiastical discipline, the third and last division of the subject, it is not intended to discuss the particular manner, rules, customs, institutions, and external observances which may accompany its exercise. These may be various, as they have been varied, according as circumstances may require. The design of this work is to investigate general principles ; and the only questions with which we are now concerned are : Does the authority of the church extend to the enforcement of discipline ? And if it does, what are the cases which come within its jurisdiction ? and what are the nature and effects of its punitive power ? that is, its power to enforce discipline. The way will be best prepared for a solution of these questions, and the investigation simplified, by a previous review of the most important texts relating to them.

The first is our Lord's declaration to Peter ; " Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven ; and what-

soever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven," Matt. xvi. 18, 19. If by the "rock" is meant the profession of faith which Peter had just made, that Jesus was, "the Christ, the Son of the living God," it is a declaration that faith in Christ is the basis of his religion. But if, as appears little less than certain, it refers to Peter himself, our Saviour did not build his church upon him alone in any other way than by ordaining him to be the first apostle to preach it to the Jews, Acts ii. 41, et seq.; and to the Gentiles, Acts x. 5—15, 7, et seq. By "the kingdom of heaven" is no doubt meant the gospel dispensation; and the figurative expression of giving the keys is explained, in the next clause, to be the power of "binding" and "loosing." These words signify, in Jewish phrase, *to declare any thing to be lawful or unlawful*; and, therefore, the meaning is, whatsoever Peter should declare to be lawful or unlawful on earth, should be ratified in heaven; viz. in reference to the exercise of the power granted by giving him "the keys."

The next passage is Matt. xviii. 15—20; where our Lord bids them, if private admonitions fail to reclaim an offending brother, to "tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man, and a publican. Verily I say unto

you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." By "church" cannot be meant the Jewish synagogue, or sanhedrim, as some contend, on the ground that a Christian church had no existence when these words were spoken; for it is very improbable that Christ should direct them to apply to a tribunal in an economy that was going to cease. Besides, in the text just reviewed, he had not long before made mention of the church which he was about to erect, and it is very likely that he adverts to it in this place. The expressions also in ver. 20, "where two or three are gathered together in my name," can only have reference to a Christian assembly. By "the church," therefore, is intended the particular congregation, or society of worshipping brethren, to which the parties belong; or, as it is very unlikely that private offences should be communicated to every individual amongst them, it should rather seem to denote the rulers and governing powers of that congregation'. A church can only act by and through its rulers; and therefore, a command to tell it to the church is equivalent to tell it to the church governors for their decision; and a neglect to "hear the church," must mean a contempt of their authority.

¹ See P. II. ch. ii. § ii. p. 183.

No doubt, then, can remain that the whole passage relates to church discipline; and hence the expressions "whatsoever ye shall bind," &c. ver. 18, means whatsoever you declare to be lawful and right, or the contrary, concerning an offending brother, shall be ratified in heaven. It is obvious to common sense that ver. 19. must be limited in the same way; namely, that "if two of you," *i. e.* if a greater or smaller number of you, and your successors, the governors and ministers of the church "shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask," concerning your or their decisions in regard to an offending brother, "it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven," *i. e.* their petitions shall be granted. "For where two or three are gathered together," &c. ver. 20, *i. e.* for the purpose before mentioned, to decide upon the case of an offence committed by a brother Christian; "there am I in the midst of them," to aid them by my especial grace and favour.

The remaining passage to be noticed is our Saviour's words to his immediate disciples, after his resurrection, "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained," John xx. 23. The terms "remitting" and "retaining" are without doubt equivalent to our Lord's expressions above considered of "binding" and "loosing;" and the passage is plainly parallel with

Matt. xviii. 18; so that the meaning is, whose sins soever of your offending brethren you shall declare to be remitted or forgiven, shall be forgiven; and whosoever sins you shall declare to be unpardoned, shall be unpardoned. Thus it refers to the power of remitting and retaining the sins of offending brethren.

The same observation applies to the two former passages, in which the power conveyed by the keys, and by the terms binding and loosing, refers to persons—not to things. The apostles had no authority to promulgate any law or any doctrine at their own suggestion; they were to speak as they were instructed and instigated by the Holy Ghost. Even if the employment of the neuter gender (δ and $\delta\sigma\alpha$) would justify us in interpreting of things; yet such things are meant as concern persons, which comes to the same sense—namely, that the power of the keys, and of binding and loosing, as well as of remitting and retaining sins, is to be exercised in reference to offending brethren.

Taking these passages in conjunction, it is evident that this power first granted to St. Peter was not his exclusive privilege; for, in the two latter, it is expressly conferred upon all the apostles; and by fair inference upon their successors, the governors and ministers of the church. Ecclesiastical government, as has been before shown, first committed by Christ to the apostles, was intended to be continued in their

successors, whom he appointed to rule the church, as his vicegerents, till the consummation of all things; which infers the continuance of the power of binding and loosing. The same inference follows from some particulars in the passages themselves. There is nothing whatever limiting this power to the apostles personally; while on the other hand, the expressions are general; addressed, indeed, primarily to the apostles, but only to them as the first governors of the church, and the representatives of all who should follow. The promise in ver. 20. clearly implies, that whenever and wherever, in any place or at any time, two or three of them were gathered together in Christ's name, he would be with them. As the direction for the private admonition of offenders is of universal obligation, Matt. xviii. 15, 16, so must be that of public remonstrance before the church, ver. 17. Coupling these things with the intended perpetuity of a ministerial order with apostolic jurisdiction, it admits not a rational doubt, that the authority which our Saviour gave to the apostles was to extend to their successors in the government of the church.

1. Reverting to our *first* question, it may certainly be inferred from these passages that Christ has left a power in the church to enforce discipline. The privilege of binding and loosing, that is, of pronouncing what is lawful and right, and what is not so, in respect to offending

brethren, is an express and ample grant of a power to exercise a control and discipline over them. So much is undeniable, whatever farther meaning the passages may convey; and consider what an extent of authority it embraces. It includes every thing requisite to the due and efficient exercise of ecclesiastical discipline—a power to take cognizance of offenders, to make such regulations as may be necessary for this purpose, to prescribe such tests as may be proper for the ends of justice; and, after trial, to pronounce an authoritative sentence; all which amount to a power to impose articles of faith, and to declare the terms of church communion. Why “tell it to the church,” unless the church had the power of deciding in the case of a brother’s offence? And why call for her decision, unless she is empowered not only to pronounce, but likewise to enforce that decision? Her authority, then, extends so far, that she has a right to call offenders to account, to inflict a punishment when they deserve it, and to absolve them from that punishment, when they merit lenity and pardon.

2. With respect to the crimes amenable to this jurisdiction, which is the *second* question to be solved, it extends to all open and *notorious* offences against morality and religion. The end for which the church was founded being to train the members for immortality by preserving the purity of their faith, and advancing them

to the highest degree of holiness attainable on earth, whatever directly counteracts this design comes within her cognizance. That persons guilty of scandalous vices and immoralities, if persevered in without repentance, are justly subject to ecclesiastical censures, is clear from the case of the incestuous person in the Church of Corinth, upon whom the apostle himself passed sentence, and enjoined the converts there to concur in it, 1 Cor. v. 1. et seq. The directions to withdraw from every brother that walketh disorderly, and to have no familiar intercourse, no friendly communication with evil-doers, are as much directions for the church to cast them out, as for private Christians to reject association with them. A pure and spiritual dispensation cannot tolerate notorious crimes¹.

Church authority also extends to the punishment of those who deny, pervert, or obstinately oppose any essential article of the Christian faith; for, without this privilege, she would be unable to preserve the doctrine of Christ in its purity, which is her office as the depository and guardian of true religion. St. John's direction is,

¹ Some think that in the primitive church the only crimes cognizable were *uncleanness, idolatry, and bloodshed*. Marshall, *Penitential Discipline of the Prim. Church*, ch. ii. p. li. § 1.; but Bingham has proved that it extended to the whole Decalogue, or to transgressions against the moral law in every instance, lib. 16. cap. 4. See Morinus, *De Pœnitentia*, fol. Antwerp, 1682; Selden, *De Synedrîis vet. Ebræor.* lib. 1. cap. 7. et seq. 4to. Amstel. 1679.

“ If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed ; for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds,” 2 John, 10, 11. Respecting Diotrephes, who arrogated too great a pre-eminence, refusing to receive or submit to the apostle, he says, “ Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds,” 3 John, 10 ; I will not forget to punish him for his deeds against the progress of the truth, as the word is used, Heb. viii. 12. The angel or bishop of the Church of Ephesus had power to try and convict false apostles and teachers, Rev. ii. 2 ; and the Bishop of Pergamos was reproved for tolerating the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which the Lord hated. St. Paul delivered Hymenæus over to Satan, which, in whatever way understood, denotes some kind of punishment, because he had made shipwreck of his faith, and had erred concerning the faith, 1 Tim. i. 19, 20 ; 2 Tim. ii. 17, 18. The same apostle commands the Thessalonians to withdraw from those who walked “ disorderly, and not after the tradition” which they received from the apostles, 2 Thess. iii. 6 ; and again, “ if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed,” ver. 14. To Titus he says, “ A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject,” ch. iii. 10 ; which implies that heretics who persisted in their errors,

were to be excluded from the communion of Christians.

Such are the offences which come within the discipline of the church ; but then it is not every violation of morality that it can reach. Some sins are too private, and others of such a character as not to fall under the cognizance of any human tribunal ; which can only notice those which are public, and known, and capable of being proved by competent witnesses. Open and notorious offences, then, such as give public scandal, are the objects of this discipline. Neither is it every error in opinion, nor every mistaken view in religion, which ought to subject men to the ecclesiastical censures. It must be some tenet decidedly heretical, openly avowed and maintained ; some undoubted perversion of, or factious opposition to, those doctrines which are plainly asserted in the Word of God, and the belief of which is there required as necessary to the hope of eternal life, as the free gift of God in Christ Jesus. Those who are chargeable with errors of this kind, so destructive of the purity of the Christian faith, and so dangerous to the highest interests of men if suffered to spread without a check, equally fall within the jurisdiction of the church as those who are guilty of palpable and gross immoralities.

3. This jurisdiction, it is obvious, would be an empty name, without the right to enforce obedience ; a punitive power is, therefore, indisso-

lably connected with ecclesiastical discipline. As to the nature of it, which is our *third* question, the church, it is evident, can only visit offences in a manner consistent with the character of its constitution and government, which are wholly spiritual. It cannot for this reason inflict any civil punishment; for that belongs to the office of the civil magistrate. As a spiritual society it can only deal with spiritual penalties; which extend no farther than to the exclusion of offenders from the privileges with which it is itself endowed. All that our Lord directs to be done towards an obstinate offender is to treat him "as an heathen and a publican;" that is, as one cut off from the Christian society, and no longer a member. The apostolical practice and injunctions all point to the same course; the believers were to withdraw from the disorderly and heretical, and to reject such from communion with them. The only punishment, then, which the church can lawfully inflict, is excommunication; by which is meant a cutting off from all participation of Gospel ordinances, and from all communion with the visible church.

No society could long subsist without a power to punish those members who violate its laws, and disturb its peace; and the church must be possessed, like all other societies, of a power to restrain those whose conduct endangers its preservation or integrity. But independently of this, the power of punishing by excommunication

appertains to the church by divine institution. Our Saviour distinctly granted it in the passages reviewed in the commencement of this section. The power of the keys can denote nothing less than a power to open and shut, that is, to admit into, or exclude from, the Gospel dispensation. It is an allusion to a steward to whom the master of the house commits the keys, with full power to lock and unlock the doors, and thereby to admit or exclude. The same expression occurs in Isaiah xxii. 22, where laying the keys upon the shoulder signifies the highest exercise of royal authority. Christ, it is true, only "hath the key of David," so as to open and shut at his pleasure, Revel. iii. 7; that is, hath absolute and supreme power in his church; but, though the power of the keys is originally and supremely in him, the Head, he has delegated an authority to the pastors of his church to exercise it ministerially in subordination to him; who therefore have the right to open and shut, to receive into the church by baptism, and to exclude from it by a sentence of excommunication.

It has been before observed that the terms "binding" and "loosing" are shown by the context to be used in reference to an offending brother; and consequently must convey a power to declare what is lawful and right, or otherwise, respecting him, which is in fact a power to call him to trial and to judge him. They are equivalent to the terms "remitting" and "retaining

sins," which imply a right to treat a person according as he may be guilty or innocent. Besides the power of binding and loosing is the power of the keys, which, as has been shown, delegates the right of excommunication. The phrase also "let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican" has clearly a reference to the exclusion of the offender; viz. avoid and shun his company, as the Jews do that of heathens and publicans. This is the most natural sense; so long as he continued impenitent, they were to consider him as no longer a member of the church, and to treat him accordingly; which amounts to a sentence of exclusion from the church.

What is related concerning the incestuous person at Corinth is an unquestionable instance of excommunication, 1 Cor. v. 1, et seq.; 2 Cor. ii. 6. The right to inflict this punishment is also deducible from Rom. xvi. 17; Gal. v. 7—13; 2 Thess. iii. 6, 14; 1 Tim. v. 1, 2, 19, 20; vi. 4, 5; Tit. iii. 10, 11; Jude 22, 23; Revel. ii. 2, et seq. These texts are merely referred to, as it seems unnecessary to dwell upon so clear a case as the right of the church to excommunicate.

Together with the power of inflicting, the church has the power to absolve from ecclesiastical punishments. As her punitive jurisdiction extends to the exclusion of offenders from her pale, so does her absolving power to the

re-admission of them upon their repentance. But the state may likewise come to her aid; and may accompany her judgments and decisions with such temporal penalties as may be deemed expedient for the security and advancement of the established religion. The limits within which the civil magistrate may bring the authority of the state to her assistance, and beyond which he cannot go without violating his duty, have been before pointed out¹; but the church, as such, only wields a spiritual authority; and her power to enforce discipline is limited to the infliction and removal of spiritual penalties.

The exercise of this right is entrusted to the governors and pastors of the church, and not to the whole body of its members. By the special designation of its Divine Founder officers are commissioned to rule over it, who must consequently have the power to enforce their rule by the only penalties which the church is empowered to inflict. If Christ has instituted a Gospel ministry he must have endued them with an authority to discharge their office of instructors, guides, and governors of the Christian society; and, as for this purpose a punitive power is indispensable; it must belong to the ministers and pastors of the church.

But whether it is strictly appropriated to the

¹ P. I. ch. iv. and v., P. II. ch. II. § iv.

episcopal order, or to the others along with them, is a matter of some difficulty. At the first glance, it may no doubt appear to be delegated to others also, since the excommunication of the incestuous Corinthian is said to be a punishment "inflicted of many," 2 Cor. ii. 6; and mention is made of "governments," 1 Cor. xii. 28; of "elders that rule well," 1 Tim. v. 17; and the people are addressed as those who ought to put away the disorderly and offenders from their society and communion, 2 Thess. iii. 6, 14. et al. But these, and other passages of the like kind, are no evidence that the people participated in the government of the church, as has been shown in a preceding chapter¹; and therefore cannot prove that they can join in excommunication.

On the other hand, St. Paul claims authority to come with a rod, to use sharpness, to revenge all disobedience, 1 Cor. iv. 21; 2 Cor. x. 6, 8—13; xiii. 10: and St. John says that he would "remember," that is, punish Diotrephes, 3 John, 10; a power which, of course, descends to their successors, the episcopal order, to whose office, as rulers of the church, it necessarily belongs. Accordingly, we find that it was exercised by Timothy; for the injunction, "against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses," 1 Tim. v. 19, implies a power

¹ P. II. ch. ii. § 2. p. 194.

of judging and punishing: and by Titus, who was commanded to reject "an heretic after the first and second admonition," Tit. iii. 10, that is, to separate him from the communion of the church. The act of legislation belongs to the three ministerial ranks conjointly; but the executive government, the superintendency over the church, and the administration of its laws, rest with the highest order; and from this function the punitive authority cannot be detached; so that it seems clearly to be the privilege of the episcopal office to inflict or remove ecclesiastical penalties, subject, nevertheless, to those rules and modifications which may be made by the legislative power of each particular church.

The effects and consequences of ecclesiastical penalties can be only of the same character as the penalties themselves. They may, it is true, be accompanied with temporal pains and disabilities, such as the civil governor may deem expedient to attach to them; but as far as the authority of the church extends, their effects, like the power from which they proceed, are wholly spiritual.

They are, in the first place, what they were designed to be—moral correctives. The end for which the church was founded being to promote the honour of God, and the salvation of men, by maintaining the purity of religion; the excommunicating power tends to accomplish this

end in respect to the members collectively, by expelling from among them the wicked and unholy, who are an abomination to God. To permit the continuance in any society of those who are constantly offending against its laws is both dishonourable and dangerous to it; especially to the church, whose great design would be defeated, and its very existence put in jeopardy, if notorious offenders were suffered to remain in its communion. The expulsion of such is also a means of preserving the rest of the members from being corrupted by their example and seducements; which all men are taught to avoid, by witnessing the punishment inflicted upon those who transgress against the purity of faith and morals. It has likewise a powerful tendency to encourage the main design of all punishments, the reformation of offenders. The authority which the Lord has given to the church is intended "for edification, and not for destruction," 2 Cor. x. 8; and therefore St. Paul delivered the incestuous offender unto Satan, "that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus," 1 Cor. v. 5: and the Thessalonians were commanded to expel the disobedient from their society, that they might thereby be ashamed, and brought to repentance, 2 Thess. iii. 14.

But the spiritual consequences extend a great deal further. The condition of those who are excluded from the church cannot be the same as

that of those who are within its pale, and entitled to all the benefits of communion. By exclusion the privileges of the baptismal covenant are forfeited; and, as an admirable writer says, "If there be any blessing or happiness in our being admitted into the church, there must be as much misery and punishment in our exclusion from it; for as it implies the loss of all those privileges and favours we were made partakers of, by our admission into the church; so we must needs be punished in the same degree that we were happy!" Whatever sentence is passed by the governors of the church shall, as our Saviour declares, be ratified in heaven; which is the same that is done by every prince, who confirms the acts of his vicegerents. Excommunication, therefore, affects the condition of offenders in the sight of God; so that they forfeit, in consequence, all the blessings of communion with the visible church, and become outcasts from His favour, and aliens to His covenanted mercies.

As the same authority which inflicts, may remove penalties, it follows, by parity of reason, that the awful effects of excommunication may be revoked by the absolving power of the church. As those who are cut off from communion with the visible church, are cut off from participation in the visible means of grace, they are deprived of the best, if not the only means of participating

in the covenanted mercies of God. The church can remove this interdict, and restore them to the enjoyment of the effectual means of grace and salvation. Let the power conveyed by the terms, "binding and loosing," "retaining and remitting sins," be reflected upon seriously, and it will hardly be denied, that, in the lowest sense in which they can be applied to the successors of the Apostles, they imply some effective power of absolution. When our Lord declared, "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them," it surely amounts to a declaration that the penitent so absolved is freed from the penalties which his sins had brought down upon him; that the effects of excommunication are removed; for whatever sentence shall be duly passed, according to the power thus intrusted to the governors of the church, shall be ratified in heaven.

The removal of the pains of excommunication is not the whole included in the power of absolution. That, as it should seem, is the exclusive province of bishops; but AN authority to absolve is also vested generally in the ministers of Christ, who are empowered by the very nature of their commission to proclaim the conditions of the forgiveness of sins, to declare and pronounce to the people of God, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins. Christ will be with the ministry ordained by His institution, "even to the end of the world;" and through

them he dispenses spiritual gifts and graces. By the instrumentality of the elders of the church, says St. James, in reference to a sick person, "If he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him," James v. 15, where, according to many learned critics, the true rendering is, "If he have committed sins, remission or absolution shall be given him;" that is, pardon, by means of the presbyters, would be granted him. They are ordained for men in things pertaining to God, Heb. v. 1, who has reconciled the world to himself by Jesus Christ, & committed to his ambassadors "the ministry of reconciliation," 2 Cor. v. 18, who consequently are instrumental in conveying this pardon and reconciliation.

God alone can forgive sins; no man, or body of men, can do it by any judicial act of their own; but they *may* ministerially; they *may* be the medium by which God conveys it to those whom he has reconciled to himself. No judicial power is ascribed to the ministry; nor is it for a moment supposed that they can of their own will communicate or withhold the Divine pardon; or that they can so much as know the persons to whom, when they pronounce absolution, the benefit of it is applied. It is effectually sealed only to those who come within the terms proposed in the gospel; and it belongs to Omniscience alone to search the heart. But when the nature of the ministerial commission,

the extent of the authority it confers, and the blessings promised by Christ to the ministrations of faithful pastors are considered, it is reasonable to conclude that absolution is in some way an actual conveyance of pardon to those who fulfil the conditions upon which it is offered, to those who truly repent and unfeignedly believe; and that the spiritual blessing of forgiveness of sins is authoritatively applied to the duly prepared recipients of absolution, in the same manner as an inward and spiritual grace accompanies the worthy participation of the holy sacraments.

Against this view of the excommunicating and absolving powers of the Church it is urged, that it is unreasonable to suppose Christ would give to a human and fallible tribunal powers which affect the eternal interests of men, and which from their liability to error, would render men's salvation precarious and uncertain. But the Deity has acted in the same manner with regard to other matters confessedly affecting the condition of men in the sight of God. The belief of Christianity, and the reception of the sacraments, it will not be denied, have some influence upon the condition of the soul in another world; yet the preaching of the former, and the administration of the latter, are committed to fallible men, who may mistake or pervert them. If there be any force in the objection, we might argue that neither the

sacraments nor Christianity itself can be divinely instituted; since, being committed to fallible men, they may be abused, and the salvation of men thereby endangered. Such reasoning amounts to this, that the right application of divine ordinances cannot be effectual, because they have no effect when wrongly applied; the fallacy of which is extremely apparent. A wrong sentence of excommunication will doubtless be of no avail; absolution will doubtless be of no benefit to the unrighteous receiver; but for all that, a right sentence of the former, and a due reception of the latter, may, like the due participation of the sacraments, have a mighty influence upon the condition of men in a future state.

These powers, it is also contended, can have no effect in the other world, because the displeasure of God is incurred solely on account of a man's own behaviour; if his conduct be bad, he will suffer merited punishment without any human condemnation; but if good, no human sentence of absolution can either prevent or forward his reward. The plausibility of this objection will vanish upon a little consideration; for it might be applied with equal success against the Christian religion itself; and it might be in the same way argued, that, as God's displeasure is incurred by a man's behaviour alone, the outward means of grace can neither raise nor lower men in the Divine favour.

Nay, it might be even argued, that the coming of Christ into the world can be of no effect in that respect, if God's displeasure depends solely upon their conduct. Yet he tells the Jews that "if he had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloke for their sin," John xv. 22. which plainly implies that his coming into the world altered their condition as to the favour of God. And why may not the same effect attend a just sentence of excommunication, or a devout and righteous receiving of absolution?

There is nothing, then, unreasonable in the effects here ascribed to the just exercise of ministerial authority. It is God's ordinary method to dispense both his blessings and his judgments by the hands of men. Our Saviour requires his disciples, in order to salvation, to associate themselves to a visible church, to partake of visible ordinances, and to submit to the visible ministrations of men duly commissioned to be their rulers and instructors in spiritual things. Faith forbids us to doubt that God, who is the author and worker of all graces, actually sheds his blessings upon these outward means. In respect to the preaching of the word, and the administration of the sacraments, it is not denied that grace is vouchsafed through the instrumentality of men. As little reason is there for denying that excommunication as effectually makes us aliens from the favour of God, and that absolu-

tion as really communicates a pardon, as baptism; when rightly administered, makes us the children of God, and heirs of eternal life. Our inability to comprehend *how* these things are so, is no rational ground of objection. As christians we must acknowledge that, in the Gospel covenant, the intervention of human means is made necessary to salvation. It may be inexplicable how spiritual blessings can be communicated, or the Divine judgments inflicted, through human ministrations; but we must receive the word of God in its unadulterated integrity, in full conviction that the adorable Creator will, though in a mode mysterious and unknown to man, reconcile absolute justice with his boundless mercy, and infinite wisdom with his providential government of the world.

CHAPTER V.

ON CHURCH WORSHIP.

I. The worship of Almighty God is either public, or private and domestic. With the latter the church has no further concern than to promulgate it as a necessary duty, and to recommend its continued and holy practice, leaving the manner of performing it to the direction of each individual's judgment and conscience. Its cognizance extends alone over the *public acts* of its members; with their retired devotions it cannot lawfully interfere. The claim of a power to do so can only rest upon reasons which would equally establish auricular confession; for if the church had a right to preside over the solitary prayers of believers, it would have an equal right to command their attendance at the confessional, as the most effectual way of directing their private sentiments and actions. Whatever comes under public observation, their outward religious professions, and their outward behaviour, is within the reach of

the authority which the church can exercise; but no human power has jurisdiction over the sacred and silent hours of the soul's private communion with its God.

Solitary devotion, the delighted employment and the renovating nutriment of the Christian life, must, to be effectual, be the spontaneous offering of a heart swelling with adoration to its Creator; and no one can interfere with it without trenching upon the divine and indefeasible privilege of liberty of conscience. Our blessed Lord, who exemplified it in his own conduct, frequently retired to a solitary place to pray, Matt. xiv. 23; xxvi. 36; Luke v. 16; ix. 18; and he forbids the obtrusion of others; "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet; and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly," Matt. vi. 6. To intrude into the privacy of the closet, or of the family circle, under the pretext of forwarding and guiding domestic devotion, is to invade the secrecy which is approved by our Lord, and to violate the liberty wherewith he has made us free. An authority, then, over private prayer, the church can neither lawfully assume nor confer.

As it is not the design of this work to discuss doctrinal points, the duty of publicly assembling together to worship God, must here be taken for granted. But the external mode and various

ceremonies convenient for the performance of public worship, come within our province. These may be arranged under three heads—the Place, the Time, and the Service—to which our attention is now to be directed; and, be it remembered, the discussion is not concerning the duty of private persons, but concerning the nature and extent of the authority claimed by the church to legislate in such matters, and the manner in which the right should be exercised.

II. A Christian society requires Proper Places for assembling together; otherwise some of the most solemn offices of religion—social worship, united participation of the sacraments, and instruction by the appointed teachers, would be impracticable. Hence arises the necessity of suitable and commodious buildings for the celebration of sacred rites. The institution of a Christian ministry, and the existence of a visible church, imply the obligation to provide religious edifices sufficiently numerous and capacious. The erection of them, therefore, is the indispensable concomitant of a national establishment, which must be inefficacious without them; or, more properly speaking, altogether useless.

“Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands,” Acts vii. 48; compare ch. xvii. 24: that is, the power and majesty of the Almighty cannot be circumscribed, even by the utmost bounds of the creation, much less

can they be confined within a temple made with hands; yet he has always pointed out and approved some particular place for his immediate worship. In the patriarchal ages, he designated certain spots as holy ground,—as places where he was to be invoked. Such in the opinion of many commentators was the place where Abraham planted a grove, and called upon the name of the Lord, Gen. xxi. 33; where the Lord appeared to Isaac, Gen. xxvi. 24, 25; and where Jacob offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac, Gen. xlv. 1. et seq. Jacob called the place where he had his vision, on his way from Beersheba to Haran, “none other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven;” and changed its name to Bethel, which in Hebrew denotes *the house of God*; and made a vow, that if he came again to his father’s house in peace, the pillar which he set up for a memorial should be God’s house, and he would “give to God the tenth of all his substance,” Gen. xxviii. 11. et seq. The Divine command for the tabernacle to be made, and afterwards the temple to be erected for the august habitation of his glory, and where he was to be revered and served in the ordinances of his own appointment, most clearly manifests the will of God in the appropriation of set places for his worship. So jealous was he of his great name, that under the old dispensation, he limited the prescribed veneration of it to places of his own special selection.

Our blessed Saviour chose a particular room for the celebration of the Paschal solemnity with his disciples, Mark xiv. 13—15; Luke xxii. 10—12. It was customary with the Jews to have such a room set apart for private devotions and state occasions; and such was the “guest-chamber,” spoken of by our Lord, as is probable from its being already “furnished and prepared.” In the same room probably the apostles were assembled, when Jesus, after his resurrection, appeared to them on two occasions, John xx. 19, 26; and where they met together with one accord in prayer and supplication and in the celebration of the Christian mysteries, Acts i. 13. Some distinct place, as appears from Acts ii. 1. xv. 6. xx. 7, 8, was appointed where the disciples came together for religious purposes. If the authorized rendering of Acts ii. 46, “from house to house” be correct, it may refer to those large “guest-chambers” or “upper-rooms,” which were used in many houses for devotional and public purposes; but many distinguished critics render it “in the house,” and understand it of THE particular room where the believers were wont to assemble. We read in Acts xi. 26, “that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church,” where as is probable the Greek ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ, should be rendered “in the church,” i. e. in that place where they met for the public service of God. That distinct apartments were appropriated for Christian worship

in the apostles' days is further evidenced from the opposition which St. Paul makes between the church and the private houses of the Corinthians, 1 Cor. xi. 22; compare ch. xiv. 34, 35; and from the salutations sent to and from the churches in the respective houses of persons of chief note among the brethren, which imply that suitable rooms in these houses were set apart, and appropriated for congregational services¹.

Public edifices are essential to public religion; and the holy objects for which they are designed, manifest the propriety of confining them to sacred purposes, and of consecrating them to the service of God by devout prayer and solemn observances. Some kind of ceremonial dedication is requisite to give them that publicity, without which the people would be left in a state of uncertainty where to seek for Christian instruction, and where to partake of the ordinances of the Gospel. The performance of the duties of religion, and the presence of a Christian assembly, it may be said, make the place sufficiently public, as the presence of the king and his retinue makes any person's mansion a court. But

¹ The subject of this paragraph is ably treated, besides by some of the writers mentioned in the list of authors, by Spelman, *De non Temerandis Ecclesiis*; Mede, *Works*, lib. 2; Fuller, *Templa Christianorum Apos. temp. ædificata*; Norris, *Sermon on the Doctrine of Holy Places*, with an Appendix; but see Vitringa, *De Synag. Vet. lib. 1. p. i. cap. 3*.

these may be only temporary ; to make a religious edifice permanent and public, there must be a public assignment of it to sacred services. The church, moreover, has a right to watch over the performance of the rites which she enjoins, and to take care that her officers inculcate no other doctrines than those she approves ; which would be impossible if they were at liberty to minister in any place where chance or fancy might direct them. No vigilant and effective control could be exercised over the ministry, if they were not confined to fixed and established places in their public ministrations. Without such an arrangement the spiritual governors of the church would be unable to distinguish the religious services which they are to superintend and regulate, from those domestic altars which are not within their province.

A solemn dedication of ecclesiastical structures is in accordance with the principles of human nature, and of revelation. No unsophisticated and devout mind can tolerate the profanation of converting to the ordinary purposes of life those things which are, as it were, hallowed by the service of God. An associated feeling of reverence is excited by whatever is separated from common uses to the honour of the Most High ; and who can tread the courts of the Lord's house, without feeling a warmer spirit of devotion kindled within his heart ? It

requires no great powers of wit to scoff at the imagined sanctity of holy places¹; and no rational person will maintain that consecrated ground possesses any intrinsic holiness, or that prayers are necessarily more prevailing with God in one place than another. But religious edifices are indispensable where religion is publicly professed; the public assignment of them to the service of God is fit and expedient; and cold must be that heart which recoils not at the thought of profaning them to secular purposes, which glows not with an ardour of more elevated devotion while joining fellow-worshippers within these hallowed precincts in orisons of prayer and praise. The profound but stern piety of England's greatest writer grew warmer even amid the ruins of Iona.

Nor is scriptural sanction wanting for devoting places to the service of God with holy rites and ceremonies. Jacob "took the stone which he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it," and then called the place Bethel, by interpretation *the house of God*, Gen. xxviii. 18. At the command of the Almighty the tabernacle, together with all its utensils, was to be sanctified before he filled it with his glory, Exod. xl. 9, 10. The solemn dedication of the temple built by Solo-

¹ See the keen but groundless remarks in the Independent Whig, No. 25.

mon was accompanied with all the imposing ceremonies which gave a splendour and a sanctity to the Israelitish worship, 1 Kings viii. 1, et seq. A second solemn dedication of it took place when the captive exiles of Babylon celebrated its restoration under Zerubbabel with sacrifices and with joy, Ezra vi. 16. Every thing used in the Levitical worship, down to the meanest vessel, was devoutly set apart, and sanctified for the service of the sanctuary. These examples recorded for our learning may assure us that the solemnities of a consecrated worship can be no less needed, and no less proper in opening Christian temples, designed for purposes no less holy and devout. The voice of prayer for the divine blessing, the fit attendant on all our offerings of piety, should not be wanting at the erection of those structures, from which the supplications of hearts entranced with the mercies of redeeming love are to ascend, in united chorus, to the tri-une God.

A system of domestic religious service has been of late highly recommended, and that, too, in quarters from which it derives no ordinary weight. A vagueness of ideas, or at least a want of precision of language, so much predominates among its advocates, that it is difficult to comprehend the exact nature of the system so highly eulogized. The giving *private* advice and instruction in religious concerns to the individuals of a family, is a practice which cannot be too

strongly recommended, provided it be exercised with a cautious prudence. But something more is intended; and it is described to be the simple reading and exposition of Scripture to such a party as can be conveniently assembled in the houses of the poor. The accompaniment of prayer is doubtless not to be omitted on these occasions; so that it essentially consists in assembling together in a private house such a number of neighbours as it can conveniently contain, for the purpose of prayer, and of expounding or preaching to them; for these are convertible terms, and to pretend the contrary is a mere quibble unworthy to be used in any serious argument. If this be a true description of what may be fitly denominated "the domiciliary system," it is clearly opposed to the principles above established; whatever it may be in name, it is in fact public worship; which, it has been shown, the well-being of the church requires to be performed in some edifice publicly set apart, and publicly known and recognized as the house of prayer. On what grounds, then, is it attempted to defend a scheme in principle so objectionable?

It is alleged that it opens an avenue by which we may approach the sheep which have strayed and are scattered in the wilderness. They will not seek the shepherd; they know not why they should. The shepherd must seek them. They will not come for "the bread of life;" we must

take it to them.—This position has been taken up by Dr. Chalmers, who, by a brilliancy of eloquence, and an incessant iteration of the most powerful argument, has rendered it absolutely impregnable. It bears with irresistible cogency against the voluntary system; proving the necessity of offering religion to the people, of making its services accessible to them, and the consequent necessity of an ecclesiastical establishment by which alone it can be effectually accomplished. But the principle, however true, leaves the manner and the means of applying it entirely undecided. Though “the bread of life,” it is acknowledged, must be taken to the sheep who are scattered in the wilderness, it must be by means consistent with reason and Scripture; which can only be determined by considerations *independent* of the principle itself. The obligation it implies is one thing, the mode of fulfilling it is another; and the fitness or unfitness of any particular mode of carrying it into effect necessarily rests on different grounds. The shepherd must seek the sheep, it is granted; but quite inconclusive is the inference that it must be by domiciliary expounding. With as much reason may the Romanist support auricular confession on the plea that it is the best mode of bringing religion home to the bosoms and business of men.

The excellent results which are supposed to proceed from these lectures are dwelt upon as

unanswerable evidence in their favour. Wherever they have been introduced, it is said, the congregations increase, the sacramental attendance is larger, the signs of a divine work become more visible.—But allowing the fact, where is the evidence that these good effects are ascribed to the right cause? The writer of these pages is acquainted with some districts, where the congregations have increased, with a great augmentation of sacramental attendance, without the adoption of the “domiciliary system;” and is it not just as reasonable to argue from this fact, that the religious improvement has been effected in consequence of its non-adoption? It cannot be *proved* to be the instrumental means of producing these excellent results; the proof of such a connexion as exists between cause and effect is here wanting; and the want of it renders the argument altogether invalid. When moreover, as experience shows, a spiritual change equally great has been effected without the practice of cottage lectures, they cannot at least be requisite to produce so blessed a result; and it clearly follows that other means are equally effective. So that even admitting that an improvement in the spiritual condition of a parish has been in some cases simultaneous with the introduction of domestic expositions, it does not demonstrate their connexion as cause and effect; nor if it did, would it evince the necessity or propriety of them, since other means have been

found equally successful. But after all, the fact itself admits of doubt; for, if the writer's information be correct, instances might be pointed out where the attempt has wholly failed.

Cottage lectures are also said to afford an opportunity for religious instruction to many who would otherwise from local circumstances be deprived of it.—It is unfortunately too true that a great number of inhabitants, especially in manufacturing towns and districts, are so situated as to be actually deprived of the means of public worship in the established church. Though with many by whom the plea is urged it may be only an idle excuse for non-attendance upon the ordinances of religion, the want of church accommodation is undeniable and deplorable. The question is, in what way the want may be best supplied? For an object so devoutly to be wished, let every legitimate channel be opened, every legitimate effort made; and if the holy zeal in this sacred cause, which has of late been kindled, should continue to diffuse and augment its hallowed flame in the hearts of the powerful and wealthy, the present generation may live to exult in its triumph by the removal of the evil. But let it not be attempted to supply an acknowledged want in any manner opposed to the fundamental principles of the church. Whether cottage expositions of Scripture are so or not, the argument takes for granted that they can in some degree supply this want; which may well

be disputed. At any rate it does not prove them to be a proper mode of doing it.

It is not uncommon to hear it asserted in conversation, that, in consequence of the want of church-room, it is better to give the people some religious instruction, though it may be inadequate, and in a manner somewhat irregular, than to suffer them to remain without it. All, it is certain, ought to promote religion to the extent of their ability, whether it be much or little; but any transgression of the limits strictly allowable, however specious it may be made, and whatever advantages it may seem to promise, will, in the end, and upon the long run, be detrimental. Failure will ever attend the project of doing evil that good may come.

But these lectures, it is further alleged, shew an earnestness on the part of the minister himself, which has an indescribable effect upon the minds of others. They shew that he cannot be satisfied with the state of things existing around him. They shew that he cannot be satisfied, while any remain without "the knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ, whom He has sent."—Are we, then, to infer that whatever displays great earnestness on the part of the minister is therefore to be recommended for adoption? If cottage lectures are desirable because they shew the minister's "anxious zeal against ungodliness and for religion," then whatever will shew a still greater zeal must be still more desirable; and so,

in the endeavour to exhibit extraordinary earnestness, he will be led on from one step to another, till he reaches the extreme point of rank fanaticism. If it be replied, that such zeal alone is meant as is according to knowledge, then the argument, with this limitation, proves nothing; since the real question is, whether such lectures are consistent with that discreet zeal which ought to be exemplified in the conduct of the clergy.

So clearly inadequate are the reasons adduced in recommendation of the domiciliary system; and, as it is opposed to the principle of the church as regards public worship, this single consideration is sufficient to justify its rejection. Without dwelling upon the many other convincing arguments against it, which would lead to a lengthened discussion, it may be observed, that it violates ecclesiastical order by introducing a system of preaching, dependent upon the will of the minister; that in most parishes the labour and exertion demanded by it would wear down the strongest constitution; that it must trench upon the time which ought to be devoted either to studious retirement, or to other pastoral duties; that in towns and populous districts it is physically impossible to any available extent; that in rural districts it is equally impossible, as in winter the minister could not go to a great distance, and in the summer the people would be too weary with their daily labour; that the

same apathy which keeps the robust and healthy from the church will keep them from the cottage lecture; that it can scarcely be so managed as not to interfere with the private concerns, the business, the indispensable avocations of the poor; that the decorum and solemnity so requisite to a rational and abiding piety would seldom be preserved; that it would often be attended with irregularities which might become the source of error in doctrine, and corruption in practice; that its natural tendency is to encourage a spirit of enthusiasm, as well as a self-righteous opinion of being holier than others; that by accustoming the people to religious services in private houses their reverence for the church, and their regard to the public ministrations, will be diminished; that from the native carelessness and indifference of man to the concerns of eternity, many of those who are church-going people would cease to frequent the public services, if they had opportunities of attending them at their own or a neighbour's cottage; and that finally a way will thus be prepared for dissent, to which it must lead by a natural and inevitable consequence. Can any serious man deliberately weigh the topics here briefly hinted at, without instantly repudiating a system in its results so injurious to the church, and so opposed to the reasonable service of religion?

These remarks, as before observed, do not

apply to *private* warning and exhortation. The duty of admonishing one another, and of seeking words whereby we may edify one another, extending to all Christians, is especially incumbent upon the ministers of the gospel, who are to be instant in season and out of season, and to watch for the souls of men as they that must give account. Pastoral advice and private admonition, it is unfortunately true, too often fall upon the ear in vain; instead of awakening the sinner to a sense of his perilous condition, they not unfrequently rouse him to an active defence of his criminality, and, by enlisting the passions of a corrupt nature in the cause, sometimes harden him in his iniquity. Those who have been the most faithful in the unostentatious discharge of this duty, have seen most reason to lament the frequent inefficacy of their exertions. But still much good is effected by it; probably far more than is easily estimated; and the proneness of sinners to mock at advice is not so much a reason for omitting the duty of private monition as for increased zeal and greater circumspection in carrying it into practice.

III. Without a Set Time, both as regards the day and the hour, public worship cannot be performed. That one day in seven is sanctified by the Almighty for the purposes of public and private devotion, may be here taken for granted; the author having endeavoured to collect and illustrate the Scriptural evidence for it in an-

other publication, "The Christian Sabbath," to which, and especially to the sixth chapter, the reader is referred.

Whether any other day can be lawfully appointed for religious objects, besides that which the Most High hath separated for his own immediate service, has been matter of frequent dispute. It is argued 1st, that the appointment of holy-days interferes with the worldly business and occupations of men, a diligent pursuit of which is required to secure the prosperity and well-being of society: 2dly, that it has a tendency to foster either bigotry on the one hand, or fanaticism on the other: 3dly, that to devote any days, except the seventh, to be kept holy, is, to say the least, to be wise above what is written: 4thly, that the Divine act of blessing and sanctifying the seventh day, implies an appropriation of the remaining six to secular employment; the commandment being express, "six days shalt thou labour:" 5thly, that the institution of fasts and festivals forms a species of will-worship, declared to be highly culpable in Col. ii. 18—23: and 6thly, that the observation of them is expressly condemned by the apostle, Gal. iv. 10; Col. ii. 16.

A little reflection cannot fail to suggest several considerations sufficient to parry the force of these reasons. To the *first* it may be replied, that it only makes against the excessive multiplication of holy days: to the *second*, that so

far from fostering either bigotry or fanaticism, they encourage a genuine piety when kept on proper occasions, and with rational observances: to the *third*, that many things are lawful in the worship of God, which are not expressly commanded in Scripture: to the *fourth*, that the sabbatical law, "six days *shalt* thou labour," means thou *mayest* labour six days in the week, as it is explained Exod. xxxi. 15. "Six days may work be done;" that is, on these thou art permitted to do thy daily work; not that thou art forbidden to keep any of them holy—otherwise the Almighty would have contradicted his own law when he appointed new-moons and other solemnities to be observed on these six days: to the *fifth*, that the will-worship spoken of Col. ii. 18—23, refers to some pretended humility consisting in the worship of angels: and to the *sixth*, that the apostolical condemnation of the observance of days, months, times, and years, extends only to the Jewish holy-days, and ordinances¹."

In addition to these satisfactory replies, it may, on the other hand, be argued, that under the Jewish dispensation God commanded other festivals, besides the Sabbath, to be sanctified; that our Saviour sanctioned with his presence the feast of the dedication, a festival of human in-

¹ Christian Expos. on the texts; the Christian Sabbath, cap. iv. § 1; Hammond, on Will-Worship, vol. i. p. 313. et seq., and on the Festivals, p. 529. et seq.

stitution, John x. 22; that the apostles and early believers were in the habit of assembling much oftener than in weekly meetings, Acts ii. 41, 42, 46, 47; that the Christian law allows perfect liberty as to occasional fasts and festivals, Rom. xiv. 1—6; Col. ii. 16—18; that the injunctions to be instant in prayer, and not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, if they do not impose, at least allow the observance of certain holy-days; that the apostle's exhortation, "for even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast," &c. 1 Cor. v. 8, if it be not a direction for keeping a holy-day, is nevertheless permissive of it; that it is the natural dictate of piety to commemorate the seasons consecrated by events of redeeming mercy, to offer up on annual festivals thanksgivings for national blessings, and on annual fasts humiliation and prayer for national sins and judgments; that the sanctification of them by appropriate solemnities is calculated to awaken an ardent feeling of piety in the heart; and that the church, in the exercise of its superintending care over its members, has a right to ordain public and periodical seasons for such religious services as may be necessary for their edification and spiritual improvement, provided nothing be ordained contrary to the word of God.

Such are the convincing grounds for the observance of occasional fasts and festivals; which,

it is obvious, can only be lawfully established by those to whom the legislative authority of the church is committed. No single clergyman is justified in appointing, of his own accord, either a holy-day, a day of humiliation, of prayer, or a week-day lecture. Any attempt of this kind is a violation of the ecclesiastical order essential to the well-being of a Christian society. Nor has a bishop such a power even within his own diocese; for his office is not to legislate, but to execute the laws; and it belongs to spiritual persons alone, assembled and acting in united council, to enact under Christ the supreme Head the laws relating to the spiritualities of the Church.

To the same power it belongs to fix the hours of divine worship, and to decree the ceremonies requisite or expedient for its solemn celebration. Many things of lesser moment relating to these points may safely be left to the regulation of bishops individually, who are intrusted with the superintendence over the inferior orders of the ministry; and in all matters thus left by the church to their discretion, they are to be guided by the general laws and directions of the church, and by a prudent exercise of the power with which they are invested. In no case to which these remarks refer ought individual ministers and presbyters to take it upon themselves to decide, without the consent and approbation of their ecclesiastical superior.

IV. The purposes for which Christian believers assemble together are, to receive religious instruction, and to offer up supplications and thanksgivings to the Almighty; which consequently form the constituent parts of the service to be performed. Though the latter alone is strictly speaking worship, it should be conducted in such a manner, and with such accompaniments as will at the same time contribute to the edification of the worshippers. Men are to present their united addresses to their Maker; but they are also to be taught the principles of Christian faith and practice, and admonished to "stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel." Whatever may be the relative importance of prayer and preaching, that is assuredly a defective service which is not also made subservient to the communication of religious knowledge and spiritual admonition. These, however, so far as they involve doctrinal matters, are not within the limits of this work; and preaching is almost wholly of this description. Neither can public prayer be here brought under discussion, beyond the external mode of performing it; and, as the subject of rites and ceremonies has already been disposed of, the only question remaining to be considered is—the Scriptural authority for a prescribed or liturgical form.

The question so propounded is not devoid of ambiguity; since what is called an extempo-

aneous prayer, if it have been premeditated, is a set form, as to the matter and the manner, though not perhaps as to the precise words. If it have been composed beforehand, it becomes clearly a set form even to the minister who utters it, as well as to the congregation; but, whether premeditated or perfectly extemporaneous and unprepared, every prayer delivered by an individual in a public assembly is in reality a set form to the hearers. They must join in it, and adopt it exactly as it is; to them it is essentially a prescribed prayer; and only so far differs from a public liturgy, that it is prescribed *instantly*, and by a single minister. The point at issue, then, is not whether a set form of prayer is to be used in divine worship, for such it must be to the congregation; but whether it is to be precomposed and publicly authorized; in other words, whether the church has a Scriptural right to prescribe a liturgy for public worship?

No express precept is adduced from the sacred writings, either in support of free prayer or in opposition to a liturgical service; but a preference of the former is sometimes grounded upon certain texts, in which the gift of prayer is promised to the faithful, as Zech. xii. 10; 1 Cor. xiv. 15; and especially Rom. viii. 26; "the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." That we can neither

pray aright nor do any good thing without God's Spirit, is most true; but it consists not in a miraculous and immediate infusion of powers and abilities. The Spirit only aids and assists; and this assistance may be expected as well in the composition of a liturgy, as in the utterance of an extemporaneous prayer; while in either case, it will be given to those who join with fervour and sincerity. From the admonition also, "Quench not the Spirit," 1 Thess. v. 19, it is inferred that there is a gift of prayer, which should not be restrained by pre-composed forms. But it is derogatory to the Divine Majesty, to suppose that it can make any difference as to quenching the Spirit, either to the minister or the hearers, whether the prayers are extemporary or after a prescribed model¹. So little can be alleged from the Scriptures against the use of liturgies, that their lawfulness is generally allowed by separatists, who, for the most part, content themselves with resting their preference of extemporaneous prayers on the ground that they are equally, if not more accordant with the spirit of the Gospel, and more edifying². On this ground, however,

¹ See Bennet, *Diss. on the Gift of Prayer*; Bp. Jer. Taylor, on *Liturgies*, in vol. vii.; Bp. Wilkins, on *Prayer*. Dissenters sometimes appeal to 1 Cor. xiv., particularly ver. 14—17; but though the chapter is of difficult interpretation, there is nothing in it, as far as the writer of these pages can perceive, opposed to the use of a liturgy.

² The concessions of the older Non-conformists may be seen in

the church has the same right, if she sees fit, to prescribe a public formulary of prayer; for which also a Scriptural warrant is claimed.

The public worship of God consists of Confession, Supplication, Intercession, Profession of Faith, Thanksgiving, and Praise. It is evidently possible for some of these parts to be performed according to a liturgical model, and others according to the fancy or discretion of the minister; but they are parts of one whole; they all equally belong to one service; and the model which befits one part can scarcely be unfit for the rest. If it be said that the duties of confession, supplication, and intercession, may be more advantageously performed in an extemporary manner, in order to adapt them to times, and incidents, and specific circumstances, the answer is—as that alone is public worship in which all can join, the subject matter of all its parts should be applicable to the aggregate body of worshippers, not merely to private individuals and peculiar cases; and, being general, may well be expressed in pre-composed terms. In the house of God the pious are assembled for one common purpose, to unite in one common service to the great Creator; and if it can be

the Lond. Cases, vol. i. or Bennet's Answer, cap. iii. It may be proper to add a few references to some more modern Dissenters who do not deny the lawfulness of set forms; as Peirce, Vind. p. 398; Doddridge, Lect. Prop. 148; Dwight, Theol. Sermon. 144; James, Christian Fel. p. 13; Address, p. 31; Scales, Principles, v. 238.

shown to be right and lawful to use a liturgy in one part, can it be wrong to conduct the whole service, with all its parts and divisions, after a prescribed form? If we may praise the Lord in a psalm of David, or in a hymn of modern composition, why should it be thought less proper to supplicate his mercy in liturgical prayers? — But there is direct evidence for the affirmative.

1. In the sacred writings, we meet with set forms, appointed to be used in the public services of religion. In *Exod. xv. 1. et seq.* is a song of thanksgiving, composed by Moses, after the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea, and the destruction of their enemies, which was sung by Moses and the children of Israel, while Miriam with the women accompanied it with timbrels and dances. They could not have joined, unless they had previously learnt it by heart; and that it is a form of prayer addressed to God, is evident from its language and contents; it is, consequently, an instance of a pre-composed form of prayer. In the book of Numbers, Aaron and his sons are commanded to observe a stated form of words in blessing the people: “On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel; saying unto them, The Lord bless thee and keep thee,” &c. *ch. vi. 23—26.* In the expiation of an uncertain murder, the elders of the city which is next to the slain were to use conjointly the following form of depre-

cation :—" Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it," &c. Deut. xxi. 7, 8. Again, in ch. xxvi. 5, 13, forms of prayer are appointed for those who offered their first-fruits and tithes. So also God, by the prophet Hosea, enjoins his people of Israel to take words and turn unto the Lord, and say, " Take away all iniquity and receive us graciously," &c. Hosea xiv. 2, 3. And by the prophet Joel he commands the priests to weep between the porch and the altar, and to say, " Spare thy people, O Lord," &c. Joel ii. 15—17.

The book of Psalms was appointed by Divine inspiration for the joint use of the congregation in the Levitical service, as appears by the titles of many of them, as well as from their being delivered by David into the hands of Asaph and his brethren, as forms for prayer, praise, and thanksgiving, 1 Chron. xvi. 7; and Hezekiah commanded the Levites to make use of them, 2 Chron. xxix. 30. The same ordinance was renewed by Ezra, ch. iii. 10, 11; and by Nehemiah, ch. xii. 24. That many of these divine compositions are precative is certain, for they are expressly called prayers. To several this title is prefixed " A Prayer of David;" the 90th is called the " Prayer of Moses, the Man of God;" the 102d is entitled " A Prayer of the Afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before God;" and at the end of the 72d psalm it is added, " The

prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended." Hence they are really forms of prayer, the only point of difference being that they express in metrical numbers what other forms deliver in prose; the circumstance of their being in metre, and intended to be sung, or chanted with a modulated enunciation, cannot alter their nature; they are, whether recited or sung, forms of confession, prayer, praise, and thanksgiving; they are, in either case, liturgical services; for it is absurd to suppose that a mere variation in the manner of enouncing them can make any distinction in their character as addresses to the Deity.

To these instances it may be added, that John the Baptist gave a form of prayer to his disciples, Luke xi. 1; so that set forms were undoubtedly in some cases appointed under the Jewish dispensation; and as this was with the Divine approbation, they must be agreeable with the Divine will. It cannot be conceived for what purpose they should have been preserved in the inspired records, except to furnish authenticated examples for the regulation of our conduct in this important particular.

2. The apostles in some instances joined in the use of pre-composed forms. On the occasion of filling up the vacancy in the apostolic college, "they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, who knowest," &c. Acts i. 24, which could not have been done, unless the very words of the

prayer had been previously arranged. They, along with others, "continued in one accord in prayer and supplication," ver. 14, which seems to imply a previously-composed service. Paul and Silas, when they were in prison, "prayed and sang praises unto God," Acts xvi. 25, which must have been vocally and aloud, for "the prisoners heard them;" and they must have united in the *same* prayer and praises, or they would have disturbed and confused each other.

3. An instance of a pre-composed form of prayer is recorded in Acts iv. 23, et seq. St. Peter and St. John, having been threatened, and commanded not to preach in the name of Jesus, "went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said," &c., where the very words of the prayer are inserted. The whole company could not thus have lifted up their voice, except the prayer had been pre-composed. To this, however, it is objected, that possibly only one of the company spoke in the name of all the rest, who might join with him mentally, not in an audible manner. The Scriptures, it is true, sometimes attribute to a multitude what was done by one person only, who acted in the name of the rest; as in the beginning of this chapter, the rulers, elders, scribes, Annas, Caiaphas, and others, are reported to have asked St. Peter and John, "By

what power," &c., ver. 7. when some one of them only can be supposed to have asked that question. But these are exceptions, where the meaning is determined by the context; in all other cases, where any thing is related as the act of a multitude, it must be understood literally as performed by every individual of them at the same instant. It must be so in the present case; for the company are said to have "lifted up their voice to God with one accord;" where the position of the adverb, *ὁμοθυμαδόν*, connects it with the verb, and therefore the meaning can be no other than that the whole company lifted up their voices all together, in conjunction; which would have been impossible, if it had been an extemporary prayer by one of the number.

It is also objected, that the transaction which gave rise to it was sudden and unforeseen, of which the Apostles could have no notice, and consequently could not be prepared with a pre-composed prayer adapted to the occasion. Now this objection assumes, *first*, that the affair was too sudden to allow time for a previous composition of it; which is not only destitute of proof, but very unlikely, considering the shortness of the prayer itself; and, *secondly*, that it was made for the particular occasion, of which likewise there is no proof; for it is quite as appropriate to the general state of the preachers of the gospel, when the powers of the world were threatening and persecuting them, as to that

particular emergency; “and therefore,” as Dr. Bennet remarks, “it is highly probable (if not certain) that it was a standing form, well known in the church, and frequently used as occasion offered. And consequently upon this occasion, on which it is manifest that it was highly seasonable and proper, they immediately brake forth, and all vocally uttered, and jointly said or sung it, and perhaps added it to their other daily devotions¹.” The objection, at least, can have no weight, since it takes for granted that which cannot be proved, which is in itself improbable, and which is opposed to the express language of the historian.

The transaction, again, has been represented as altogether extraordinary, when the whole company were enabled by a divine impulse to break forth, and join vocally in the same form of prayer. To this objection the same answer may be returned as to the former—that the assertion is utterly destitute of any evidence. If, however, it could be established, the fact would form an undeniable precedent for the use of set forms; since, if the Holy Ghost inspired the apostolic company to lift up their voices with one accord, the church is surely authorized, now that the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit are withdrawn, to enable the congregations, by public formularies of devotion, to lift up

¹ Brief Hist. of Forms of Prayer, p. 90.

their voices with one consent to the throne of the Most High.

4. St. Paul's approval of set forms may be collected from some passages in his Epistles. He prays God to grant that the Romans might "with one mind and one mouth glorify God," Rom. xv. 6, viz. that they might join in the worship and praise of God "with united hearts and voices," as Doddridge interprets it; or "unanimously, with one voice," as Mac-knight explains it¹. Again, he condemns those assemblies of the Corinthians, in which "every one hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue," &c., 1 Cor. xiv. 26. As he unquestionably never intended to forbid the use of psalms in public worship, it can be no other than the commingling of different ones in the same service, when each has his several psalm, that he condemns; which can only be prevented by having one common form. Hence, the Apostle's judgment is deducible for all to join in the same form, in order that "all things may be done unto edifying." To the Colossians likewise he writes, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,

¹ Grotius, and after him Rosenmüller, explains it by "eodem verborum sono;" and the comment of Koppe is, *Ut eisdem animi sensibus eademque oris professione* (δοξολογίαις np. et λικανείαις publice in ecclesia recitari et decantari solitis) *celebretis Deum*.

singing with grace in your hearts unto the Lord," Col. iii. 16, comp. Ephes. v. 19. This is clearly a recommendation to join together in the same psalms and hymns, which requires them to be written and learnt beforehand. Nor does it appear to apply only to singing of them; for, although this is doubtless in part intended, the expressions, "teaching and admonishing," and "speaking to yourselves," in Ephesians, imply a recitation. In either case, the principle is the same; and therefore the exhortation to a *joint participation* in such compositions implies a set form.

5. Our blessed Lord sanctioned set forms of worship by His example. That in the services both of the temple and of the synagogue constant use was made of liturgical compositions, admits not a reasonable doubt; and it is quite clear that He constantly attended both, and joined in the prayers offered up; which, we may rest assured, He would not have done, or would have warned His disciples against an imitation of Him in this matter, if prescribed prayers had been inconsistent with the genius of His religion. The same inference follows from the hymn sung or recited (for in the original it is not said that it was sung) by Christ and the Apostles, after His last supper, Matt. xxvi. 30. which, whether it was the paschal hymn appointed by the Jewish liturgy, or not, could not have been extemporaneous: for they all joined

in it, and so must have been previously acquainted with the words. Again, the prayer which our Saviour offered up in the garden was a form, since he repeated it thrice, "saying the same words," Matt. xxvi. 44; Mark xiv. 39. The words also which he uttered upon the cross are the commencement of the twenty-second psalm; the whole of which, according to an ancient tradition, he repeated; at least he applied it to his own case, and it is, without contradiction, a precative composition. From all which, it is plain that we are justified in the adoption of set forms, by our Saviour's example.

6. Besides the sanction of His example, He also prescribed a form of prayer for His disciples: "After this manner, therefore, pray ye: Our Father," &c., Matt. vi. 9; not meaning that this is *only* to be used, to the exclusion of all other prayers; but that it is a fit and appropriate form to be used by all who believe in Him. The opponents of liturgies allege that the expressions do not so much imply a command to use the same words, as to make it the model of our public and private prayers; that it should rather be regarded as a general direction to pray for the same things, and to the same purpose, than as a prescribed form. But the Greek may be most naturally rendered, "Thus, therefore, pray ye:" i. e. pray in these words; for the adverb οὕτως is often employed to denote that the words which follow were ac-

tually uttered, instances of which are collected in the valuable note of Whitby on the place. And this interpretation is amply confirmed by Luke xi. 1, where it is related that Christ, on being requested to teach His disciples to pray, as John the Baptist had done, immediately replies, "When ye pray, say, Our Father," &c., which is substantially the same as the prayer in Matt. vi. 9—15; and words cannot be more expressive of His intention to impose it as a form.

The disciples of our Lord, accustomed as they were to a liturgical service in the temple and the synagogue, could not judge of it otherwise than as a set form. The several petitions of it also, with the exception perhaps of forgiving our debtors, are found in the Jewish liturgies; and our Lord's adoption of them must be deemed as sanctioning, by His example, the use of precomposed forms of prayer. Some critics, as Kuinoel, dispute the fact; but it seems clearly substantiated by Lightfoot, Vitringa, Schoettgen, Wetstein, and others, that the same phrases occur in the Jewish prayers of that age. The prayer, likewise, was twice delivered, first in His sermon on the mount, and afterwards in discourse on the way from Bethany to Galilee; which repetition, on two distinct occasions, proves it to have been intended for a form; for as Joseph said to Pharaoh, "The dream is doubled unto Pharaoh, because the thing is established by

God;" so may we say here, the delivery of this prayer was doubled unto the disciples, that they and we might thereby know the more certainly, that our Saviour intended and commended it for a set form of prayer unto His church¹."

Some differences of expression are observable between the two prayers; and from this circumstance it is argued, that if our Saviour had designed it for a set form, He would have delivered it in precisely the same terms. But on what proof does this assertion rest? In sense and substance they are both exactly the same; and the verbal variation is not greater than between the copies of the Decalogue in the Books of Exodus and Deuteronomy, or between the several accounts of our Lord's discourses in the Gospels. The Doxology in Matthew, which, however, is omitted by Griesbach and Scholz in their critical editions of the Greek Testament, is the only important difference; and yet, allowing its genuineness, what more can be inferred from it than that it is optional either to insert, or to leave it out, in using this prayer. Certain parts in the liturgy of the Church of England are sometimes to be omitted, yet it is nevertheless a prescribed formulary. After all, Christ may have actually used the very same expressions; for it was delivered in the Aramean dialect, and the small variations in the two

¹ Mede, Works, p. 2.

Evangelists are such as might easily occur in translating from the same original. Even when translated into Syriac the differences are less than in the Greek, as will be evident by comparing the two passages in the Peschito.

It is likewise urged that, admitting it to be a form, the nature of the petitions, especially its not being a prayer in the name of Christ, show that it was to be used only for a time previous to the descent of the Holy Ghost; for all prayers after our Lord's ascension were to be offered up in His name, John xiv. 13, 14; xv. 16; xvi. 23, 24, 26; Col. iii. 17. Though great importance is attached to this by some writers, it will not bear examination. By the same mode of reasoning, it would follow that the prayer of the apostolic company, recorded Acts iv. 24, was a sinful prayer, because no mention is made in it of Christ's merits and intercession; nay, that for the same reason, the singing or reciting the Psalms of David, or the using short ejaculations in prayer, would be unlawful. Our Saviour has not given the least intimation of its being intended for a temporary purpose; while the several petitions will be for ever appropriate from the lips of Christians. "Thy kingdom come" relates unquestionably in part to the gospel dispensation, and may be properly used till the kingdom of grace on earth is swallowed up in the kingdom of glory hereafter. Besides a trust in Christ's merits and mediation,

though without any mention of them, is virtually implied; for to pray in Christ's name is to pray in humble dependence upon his intercession for the acceptance of our prayers; and this is the case when we ask in His words, and in obedience to His instructions.

It is further urged, that the Apostles and Disciples do not appear to have adopted this prayer. But though the Scriptures do not expressly mention their having used it, it would be just as unreasonable to infer that they did not comply with their Lord's command, "When ye pray, say, Our Father," &c., as to conclude that they did not baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, because it is not expressly so stated in the Sacred History.

Upon the whole, then, the Lord's prayer is a prescribed form, appointed by our Saviour for the use of His disciples, to the end of the world. This, of itself, is sufficient warrant for our imitation; and, coupling it with the previous arguments here adduced, no doubt can remain, that the church not only may lawfully, but has scriptural authority for enjoining the use of public formularies of devotion.

V. We have now ascertained what the Scriptures teach respecting ecclesiastical establishments in general, and also respecting the constitution of a visible church; the way is, therefore, prepared for entering upon the third branch

of the inquiry, stated in the introductory chapter, p. 9, whether our own church in particular corresponds with the results? But the discussion of the subject, which would require a volume, may well be spared; since it seems impossible to review attentively the preceding summary of the doctrine of Scripture concerning the Christian church, without a conviction that the ecclesiastical establishment of this country is, in its general outline and leading features, *strictly scriptural*. When, in addition to this, we further reflect upon the very meagre and empty objections to it which Nonconformists have urged from the Inspired Writings, contrasted with the abundant scriptural attestation in its favour, it is utterly improbable, making every allowance for the force of early impressions, and of the too prevalent indisposition to religious investigation, that Dissent should ever predominate among the ranks of education and intelligence. With the mass of our population, also, there is ground of pleasing expectation from the progress of moral and religious instruction. Vast is the power of truth; and the more educated the people are, the more able will they be to appreciate it. Even the very violence with which the Church of England has been assailed has had the effect of rousing its friends to renovated vigour in its defence. Nor amid the impending clouds, and eddying tem-

pests, must we forget the arm that directs the storm; only let the commissioned defenders of the sacred cause quit themselves with unshrinking fidelity, and the divine blessing will not be wanting to the most pure and apostolic of churches.

APPENDIX.

THE following List of Authors is confessedly incomplete; which, it is hoped, may admit of excuse, when it is considered that the Author's residence in the country precluded any access to the great public libraries, and that he has enjoyed but very few helps beyond what his own shelves supplied. But he deemed it right to mention only those which he has actually consulted.

The list is divided into three classes, in order to distinguish the writers on each side; but it is doubtful with respect to some of them in which class they ought to be placed. To pamphlets, and books of smaller dimensions, the number of pages is added; which may be useful to the student who may wish to collect works relating to church government.

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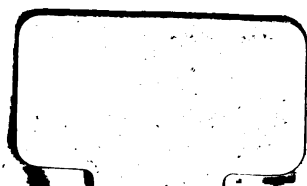
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the Author procured as they came out : viz. those by Acastor, Arnold, Barnes, Burton, Bloomfield, Berens, Bridges, Bowles, Blackburne, Booker, Cotton, Gate, Henley, Hull, Hale, Lyall, Massingberd, Miller, O'Croly, Palmer, Powell, Perceval, Rose, Slade, Townsend, Wodehouse, &c. ; with a great number of anonymous publications.

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